







ESSAYS  
ON THE  
PHILOSOPHY OF THEISM





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BY THE LATE  
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TO  
BARON FRIEDRICH VON HÜGEL.

MY DEAR BARON VON HÜGEL,

In offering these volumes of my father's philosophical essays for your acceptance, I am doing what I believe he would himself have done had he lived to republish them. They treat for the most part of subjects which you frequently discussed with him, and on which I know he valued your opinion. But a yet stronger motive which would have led him to ask you to accept them would have been the opportunity thereby afforded him of giving expression to the great esteem in which he held the friendship enjoyed by him, during the closing years of his life, with yourself and Baroness von Hugel.

I trust that your regard for his memory will render this dedication not unacceptable to you and I may add that it gives me great pleasure on personal grounds to be the means of offering the book to you—so far as I can be said to offer that which is not my own.

Believe me, dear Baron von Hugel,

Yours very sincerely,

WILFRID WARD.

March, 1884

## NOTE.

THE Editor has to offer his best thanks to the Revv J Connelly and E Pennington for their kind assistance in looking through and correcting the proofs of the following essays. The analytical contents at the commencement of each volume are in nearly every case by the Author himself. The date given after the title of each essay is the date of its original publication in the *Dublin Review*.

March, 1884

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE following essays, with the exception of the last four in the second volume, were written as part of a systematic course projected by the author with a double object: firstly, to point out the fundamental fallacies in the Experience system of philosophy, as represented especially by the late Mr Stuart Mill, and the absolute necessity of admitting the power of the human mind to perceive with certainty some immediately evident truths beyond the phenomena of consciousness; and, secondly, to draw out, on the principles thus established, an argumentative train, exhibiting the various intuitions in the intellectual and moral order, truths of observation, and deductions, whereby the existence of a Personal God, with the characteristics which Theists attribute to Him, may be established. The first of these two tasks the author considered himself to have accomplished. Of the second he had barely indicated the lines, in two essays on "Ethics in its bearing on Theism" and "The Philosophy of the Theistic Controversy," when he was deprived of all power of intellectual work by the illness which terminated in his death.

It may be worth while to say a few words as to the exact scope and aim of the essays which are here republished, for the purpose of making clear what they do and what they do not profess to accomplish. No exhaustive review

is attempted of Mr. Mill's philosophical work as a whole. Such a review would have exhibited many points of agreement between that writer and the author,\* who always considered that Mill's carefully disciplined and naturally candid and thoughtful mind had done much for the superstructure of psychology and logic, although the basis he adopted, which was substantially that of his father, and in part an inheritance from Hume, was most unsatisfactory, or rather was no basis at all. What the author did attempt was to show that the root-doctrines of the Experience School are devoid of all scientific foundation and incapable of defence, while the representatives of that school have in all the useful work they have done for philosophy been in reality acting upon those very principles of intuition which they deride as superstitious and unscientific in their opponents. If we note the consequences of this (supposing the charge to be true), we at once see the peculiar importance of the work which he undertook. If it be granted that Mill's logic is in many respects an advance upon previous works of the same description, and that the experimental method of psychology attains to valuable and new results—is, in fact, a distinct step forward in that science, there seems at first sight no escape from admitting that the methods and principles of inquiry adopted by these philosophers are really an improvement upon those which they have replaced. The writers themselves acquire all the authority which attends on success, and public opinion declares in their favour. They appeal to results as the positive proof that the first principles whence they started were sound. And the consequence is that people do not look closely at the real connection between their success and their avowed prin-

\* The Review of Mill's *Logic* contributed to the *British Critic* of October, 1845, by Mr. Ward, when fellow of Balliol, shows his very high intellectual appreciation of Mill, in spite of the severity of its criticisms.

ciples. The world sees their success, and takes them at their word as to the way in which it was gained. Dr. Ward's central aim, we may say, was by a concentrated attack upon their first principles to draw attention to them, and to their absolute incompatibility with the mode of philosophizing of those who professed them. He singled out a few of their fundamental axioms, and insisted on holding them up to the light and examining them.

"These men are conjurors," he said in effect. A conjuror who is performing feats of sleight of hand before an audience of simple villagers passes a shilling, apparently, through the table. He gives them plenty of time to examine the shilling and to mark it. They see it and touch it, and know unmistakably that there it is on one side of the table. And when it comes out on the other side, they examine it again, and recognize their own mark. But at the really critical part of the performance, he diverts their attention, and, while bidding them watch closely something unconnected with the real secret of the trick, imperceptibly passes the coin from the right hand to the left, so that when a few moments later he is pressing his right hand on the top of the table and holding a plate in his left underneath to catch the coin, as he says, when it passes through, the whole work is already done; there is no coin in the right hand; it is really under the table. He then explains to them that his method is simple enough. He scratches the table three times in one spot, and says, 'Presto open,' and the table opens and allows the coin to pass. The villagers listen with open mouths. They have no doubt this is the true explanation. See there, he is doing it again, to show them that this is really the secret of the matter. He scratches, pronounces the words, *Open* in the plate beneath the table. *Open* not doubt that he himself has done it. So also it is

with Mill and Bain. They have done a work for philosophy. They have shown up a good deal of inaccurate thinking in their predecessors, and added considerably to the analysis of mental operations. This they make clear, and take care that the world should recognize. And all the time, they profess to have been philosophizing on the principles of the Experience School, and to reject the power of the mind to know immediately anything beyond its own consciousness. Here is the trick. Their readers read these principles as they state them, and study the results, but the sleight of hand whereby the results are reached, the imperceptible insertion of intuitions into the process when nobody was looking, escapes notice. And the impossible account which they themselves give of this part of their performance is accepted, not after close scrutiny, but in virtue of the authority naturally possessed by those who have been successful in a particular department of study.

Dr. Ward's work, then, was confined to the detection of this sleight of hand. He insists repeatedly on the necessity of watching this part of the process, and on the absolute impossibility of accepting their own account of the philosophical method they employ, which entirely eliminates intuitive perception of truth. In all their useful and careful analysis, Mill and Bain act, he says, as unmistakably on a belief in the validity of intuitions, in the mind's power to perceive directly certain objective truths, as I do or any other Christian philosopher does. They use all the authority they have gained by successful deductions from intuition, in advocating principles which are not more subversive of religious philosophy than they are of the methods they themselves have employed.

The illustration which he himself pressed most constantly upon his opponents was the immediate and absolute trust, which is assumed in all philosophy, that coherent thought, to be rational, in the

or—to put it in such a form as will most clearly exhibit its connection with the point at issue—our trust that our present impression of what we saw or heard five minutes ago tells truly the objective fact that we *did* see or hear the thing in question. On this point the author had the advantage of learning from the rejoinder of Mr. Mill, and the express treatment of the subject by Mr. Huxley, that his apparent *reductio ad absurdum* was not based on an overstatement of the natural consequences of the Experience view. Mr. Huxley quite accepted the position that his principles allowed of no *intuitive* confidence in an act of memory, and was led in his defence of his own belief therein into what must be allowed on all hands to be an amusing slip in logic. We trust our memory with good reason, he argued, because we so constantly experience its truthfulness. The retort was obvious. Unless Mr. Huxley begins by trusting it instinctively, how can he be sure that he ever *has* experienced its truthfulness? Mr. Mill, on the other hand, admitted our belief in memory to be ultimate, because no reason can be given for it which does not presuppose its validity. This position is, as Dr. Ward pointed out, if literally accepted and carefully reflected on, most paradoxical. Dr. Ward had contended that the mind's positive declaration, if rightly analyzed, is the ultimate test of truth, and gave as an instance the act of memory. If, he said, you do not trust your mind's immediate declaration there you cannot even speak coherently, much less give any reason for your belief that memory tells truly. This was, of course, a *reductio ad absurdum*, but Mill replied as though the *ground* for the belief were the dilemma which its absence would lead to, whereas of course it would be equally true of any *false* belief that you can give no reason for it which does not presuppose its truth—indeed this would be the special characteristic of a false belief. Some superstitious old

woman tells me that she is convinced of the existence of fairies. I ask her what is her reason. "Oh," she replies, "I hear them knocking at my door in the night; and I hear them singing at Christmas time." I reply, "How do you know that the knocking is done by fairies or that the Christmas songs are not performed by the warts? *You give no reason for your belief, which does not presuppose the existence of the fairies—the very thing in question.*"

What Mr. Mill, of course, means is that the belief in the veracity of memory is plainly not derived from any prior truth, and is in that sense ultimate. But its being ultimate does not prove it to be well grounded, and it is manifestly illogical in him to regard a belief as well founded on the sole ground that his philosophy cannot get on without it. Such a mode of procedure would sanction any fanaticism that was ever devised. "All our schemes would fail, and all our faith be vain," says the follower of Mahomet, "if we did not believe Mahomet to be a prophet;" therefore forsooth he *is* a prophet! And the special case of memory presents in addition the peculiar characteristic, that reasoning in its favour from *consequences* is suicidal. In the act of recognizing the consequences, as in any other train of thought, the memory is used and trusted. The consequences cannot be known until the veracity of memory is established.

The only possible warrant, then, for our trust in memory, and its all-sufficient warrant, is the mind's own positive declaration in the very act of remembering, that it is telling truth, and it remained for Mr. Mill to show by what right, save that of expediency, he admitted the validity of that declaration, to save his neck, as it were, in this one instance, and refused to admit it, in the absence of singular external pressure, in others. This he never did. And seeing that he considered the intuition controversy of the last importance, and devoted a long *appendix* to Dr.

Ward's strictures, which he said were the best which were likely to be made by any future champion, Dr. Ward held himself justified in assuming that he did not press his explanation of this particular question further, because he had some faint perception of the probable issue of a sustained analysis of the position he had taken up

Another instance which the author selected of the want of fidelity to his avowed principles in Mr. Mill's philosophy was his belief in nature's uniformity. This belief is, by the confession of all, at the root of induction, and induction and the inductive method is the very watchword of modern philosophy, and the field in which Mill has been above all others a successful analyst of the mind's method of procedure. Dr. Ward draws out carefully, in the second and fifth essays of this collection, the impossibility of giving a reasonable ground for this belief without allowing the principle of intuition. Not that he held the belief to be itself intuitive, but it necessarily depends for its establishment on certain intuitive principles—among others the principle of causation. Mr. Bain gives up this controversy and admits,\* that we must *assume* the uniformity of nature, as we can find no other basis for physical science. And yet—we may remark in passing—what contempt do not thinkers of his school exhibit for those who say that we must assume Theism to be true because there is no other satisfactory basis for moral science! Mr. Mill was led, in reference to this controversy, into another curious logical blunder. He had summarized the uniformity of nature as an exhibition of what he called the *law of causation*. This law, he explained, implies no more than uniform phenomenal sequence, as he refuses to allow any other meaning to the word "cause," than immediate precedence in order of time. Speaking however, later on, in reference to the question raised by Dr. Ward, he declared that a miracle would be

\* See Bain's "Logic," pp 273, 274



no breach of the law of causation, as a new antecedent—viz. the volition of a supernatural being—is, by hypothesis, interposed in such a case. Thus, a law which was defined as the law of phenomenal uniformity in nature, and the basis on which physical science proceeds, is allowed by him to be consistent with as many interruptions of that uniformity as might result from the constant interference (as the author puts it) of as many deities as Homer himself supposed to inhabit Olympus. A truly marvellous basis for the inductive method! Of course such an argument is a *reductio ad absurdum*, but, as Dr. Ward points out, in such a delicate matter and in treating of principles which in their legitimate issue must overthrow religious philosophy, one has a right to expect careful thought and accurate expression: whereas in both the instances that have been named no evidence appears of either. The author frequently pointed out, that of questions such as the veracity of memory and the general uniformity of phenomena all men have abundant evidence through the intuitive and inferential powers of their own mind, working in the normal way; therefore controversy in their regard is apparently sterile and unnecessary. But this is the very reason of Dr. Ward's challenge: "You trust your intuitive perceptions," he says, "and climb by means of them to an eminence. Then you kick down the ladder by which you have climbed, and tell those who did not notice you while you were climbing, that you jumped up, and that the ladder is rotten, and would be of no use." Mr. Mill and Mr. Bain are no doubt right in trusting in memory and in nature's uniformity, but their only warrant for doing so is a process of mind involving intuition, and if they pretend to have sufficient warrant on the Experience principles let them show it. If they fail to do so, let them own that these principles are an insufficient account of the basis of their own reasoning. Dr. Ward thus expresses his view on this

matter, so far as nature's uniformity is concerned, in an essay which we have not here republished.—

"Any one who observes either the language or the general tone of Phenomenistic philosophers will see clearly (we think) that they do not *in fact* rest their belief in the uniformity of nature on any argumentative basis whatever, which they can distinctly contemplate or defend. The truth of the doctrine is made clear to them by reasons which they do not attempt to analyze, and which they could not analyze if they did attempt to do so. The uniformity of nature is borne in upon them (if we may so express ourselves) by the every-day experience of their active life. Every day they receive fresh proofs of it and live (as we may say) in contact with it. Accordingly, if they ever give their minds to an inquiry as to what those arguments are on which the doctrine can reasonably be based, any one may see that they pursue the examination in a spirit of languid indifference. They are already profoundly convinced of the doctrine, before they have even asked themselves any question as to its reasonable basis.

"Now, on this we have three remarks to make: (1) We think that their procedure is, so far, entirely reasonable. We are confident that there are several truths of vital importance to mankind, which are reasonably accepted as certain on implicit grounds of assurance. They are reasonably accepted, we say, as certain, on grounds of assurance, which have not as yet been scientifically analyzed; nay, of which, perhaps, scientific analysis transcends the power of the human mind. See what Catholic philosophers say on the *sensus communis naturæ*.

"But then (2) these philosophers are not less than wildly unreasonable when, as they are so fond of doing, they contrast their own speculative method with others, as being characteristically precise, logical, scientific. On the contrary, it is in these very qualities that their specula-

tion is as yet so conspicuously wanting. Here is a doctrine of their philosophy so fundamental, so simply at the root of their whole investigations, that unless it be known as certainly true, their whole system is one organized sham and pretence. Yet it is this very doctrine, for which they are unable to produce any precise, logical, scientific basis whatever.

"And (8) they show themselves still more narrow, prejudiced, and bigoted, when they assume (which they often do) as a kind of first principle that this method of implicit reasoning, which is so indispensably necessary for themselves, is in its nature insufficient for the certain establishment of conclusions. As one out of a thousand instances, consider what are sometimes called the "internal evidences" of religion. Even Protestants may in their measure (we are confident) reasonably appeal to these, but we will ourselves, of course, exhibit what we mean as exemplified by a Catholic. Take, then, the case of a Catholic who habitually frequents the sacraments, who practises regular self-examination and moral discipline, who makes it the one chief work of his life to discover and correct his faults, who constantly remembers God's presence, and trusts to His strength in his own efforts to acquire virtue. We say with complete confidence, that such a person possesses a quasi-experimental acquaintance with the Existence, Power, and Holiness of some great supernatural Being; an acquaintance entirely analogous to that knowledge which scientists possess of their fundamental principle, the uniformity of nature. Of course these philosophers are at full liberty to deny our allegation or to refute it if they can. But what we are here denouncing as so intolerably prejudiced and illogical is that they will not take the trouble to examine, and (if they can) refute it; that they stigmatize it as being self-evidently irrational and fanatical. The unreason and fanaticism are really on their

side. In one particular the argumentative grounds which exist for Theism possess a marked superiority over those which (as yet at least) exist for the uniformity of nature. For the former—apart altogether from implicit reasoning—there exists (we maintain) a substantial, cogent, conclusive chain of explicit argument. No such chain of argument has hitherto been set forth by any Phenomenist, for the establishment of his one fundamental scientific premiss."

I have selected the two instances of belief in memory and in nature's uniformity, because Mill joined issue on both, and accepted Dr. Ward's statement of the case as a fair one, thus rendering the charge of misrepresentation or travesty, so serviceable in evasion and so disheartening to those who are trying to probe a theory to its depths—impossible.

We are now in a position to consider further the line of the author's reasoning. If, he argued, you base your philosophy on beliefs which have no warrant save the mind's own positive declaration, you must extend your rule of certitude farther than the testimony of consciousness as to its own subjective experience. The mind's positive declaration will include this testimony, therefore you will express what is your rule of certitude, and not what you pretend that it is, by saying that what your faculties positively avouch is certainly true. But this needs a qualification. No doubt, as Mill says, intuition has been degraded by dishonesty and superstition, and men have hugged prejudices and refused to give them up because they were, they said, intuitively known as truths. Here, then, is an important work for the philosopher—to find out what is the mind's positive declaration on the one hand, and, on the other, what are those prejudices, inaccurate though spontaneous inferences, inseparable associations of feeling, and so forth, which have claimed the rank of intuitions, and being found out have damaged a good cause, as the votaries of a true

religion may discredit it by their private eccentricities or vices. The rule of certitude, in view of this consideration, is thus stated : "Whatever our existing cognitive faculties, being *rightly interrogated*, declare to be certain, is certain ;" and the motive for our certainty is the light of our reason which bids us unhesitatingly believe under such conditions. The establishment of this doctrine as to "The Rule and Motive of Certitude," forms the main object of the first essay.

The next question was to show that our faculties do positively declare the existence of certain synthetical *a priori* necessary truths, as Kant terms them. That is to say, that the mind has the power of seeing the necessary and universal truth of certain propositions which are not identical and consequently sterile, but in which the predicate expresses something which is not connoted by the subject. He agreed with Kant as to the paramount importance of this power, in the theory of philosophical knowledge.\* Mill had challenged the intuitionists in the field of mathematics, and in that field Dr. Ward defended his proposition. His crucial instance was, as appears in the second essay, "All three-sided figures have exactly three angles." The three angles are a part of neither definition nor connotation of the subject, and yet the mind pronounces with certainty that it is a necessary and universal truth that "all trilaterals are triangular." Mill treated such truths as generalizations from experience, as their objective necessity would accord ill with his principles ; and this is the view against which Dr. Ward's essay is primarily directed. He argues carefully in the same essay that the proposition in question is an absolute and ultimate decision of the mind, and no product

\* I need hardly say that he did not agree with Kant, that they related to mere "forms of thought" This doctrine destroys, of course, their objective character, although it leaves untouched their attributes of necessity and universality, which Mill denied

of association, nor, again, an inference rapidly and unconsciously made. In the succeeding essay he vindicates the same claim—to the character of a *priori* synthetic judgments—for the decisions of the mind with respect to moral truths. “To kill my father under such circumstances is wrong,” is, he maintains, a proposition seen by the mind’s own immediate light to be necessarily true, although the word “wrong” expresses an idea not contained in the definition of killing my father under the circumstances supposed.

The two next essays consist of a re-statement and development of the theses already advocated with especial reference to Mr. Mill’s reply to the *Dublin Review*, in the sixth edition of his work on Hamilton. Next in order comes the treatment of determinism, the doctrine that the action of the will is infallibly determined by the circumstances, internal and external—including under the former both natural disposition and the bent of inclination arising from habit or education—in which the agent finds himself. Dr. Ward argued against this, that we are conscious—by our own “self-intimacy” as he expressed it—of the spontaneous tendency of the will which is the natural and infallibly determined outcome of the action upon it of the forces in question. So far he goes with the determinists. He maintains that the spontaneous impulse of the will is infallibly determined, and is the natural resultant of the internal and external forces or attractions—motives, as Mr. Bain terms them—which solicit it. But, he adds, that very process of self-inspection whereby this becomes evident shows also, if it be carried further, that the mind has a sovereign power over this natural movement of the will. If you hold yourself passively, the balance of motives—or as Dr. Ward prefers to style them “attractions”—carries the day. But, on the other hand, a person may fix his attention on some end to be attained, not so vividly realized as to offer the strongest attraction to the will, but, as it were, cleaved to

doggedly by the mind's inherent power, and may in pursuance of this end make an effort of will in opposition to its spontaneous movement—an "anti-impulsive effort," as he called it. The development of this thesis, together with the replies called for by the criticisms which it provoked—from Mr. Bain, Mr. Shadworth Hodgson, and others,—and the treatment of causation in its connection with Free-will, occupy the rest of the volumes now published, with the exception of the last six papers. Of the first of these six only a portion is here reprinted, as its earlier pages consisted almost entirely of a repetition of remarks made elsewhere in the series. The portion now published indicates the view of the author—although without any full development of it—that the sense of Moral Obligation, as distinct from the mere perception of right and wrong, carries with it an intimation of the existence of a personal superior of supremely holy character. This is, it would seem, substantially identical with the view advocated by Cardinal Newman in the *Grammar of Assent*.

The succeeding essay—on the "Philosophy of the Theistic Controversy"—is the last of the series and sums up the previous ones, indicating, on the one hand, the lines on which he considered that the positive defence of Theism should proceed, and, on the other, the dispositions necessary in order that that defence should be understood and felt to be satisfactory. I think I am right in saying that as he approached close to the positive and immediate argument for God's existence, he felt more than he had done previously the necessity of something in the student which should fit him to apprehend and feel the force of directly religious argument. This was partly due to his own experience in conversation with friends of various schools of thought and habits of mind, and partly to the influence of M. Ollé Lapruné's excellent book, "*De la Certitude Morale*," which

occupied much of his attention in the closing years of his life.

The essays which follow tell their own story. The first was one which attracted much attention at the time of its appearance, and formed the subject of considerable correspondence between the author and Mr. Mill, who was much interested in it as a piece of argument. A few words with reference to the subject of this essay will not be out of place. Dr. Ward held strongly that the irreligious inferences so frequently made by scientific men from the constantly growing knowledge which fresh discoveries give us of the details of nature's uniformity, were really logical leaps, and not warranted by the facts of the case. The close intimacy which the man of science has with the links in the chain of physical causation, renders it difficult for him, unless his mind is unusually large and candid, to rise to the conception of a First Cause, self-determining, and setting in motion, so to speak, the whole series of changes by direct action on the first of the physical links in the chain. But this difficulty has its basis, not in reason, but in defective imaginative powers. He could not see that the discovery of a considerable number of uniform successions in such phenomena as those concerning the weather, in the least degree interfered with the ordinary Christian conception of a God Who is behind the veil, working always. He quotes Mill as allowing that the great test of scientifically ascertained regularity in physical phenomena, is their capability of prediction, and so far as "earthly" phenomena go—that is, those phenomena which have special connection with our planet, as, for example, the weather or the course of disease—this capability is very limited. The barometer will tell that it is to be wet within a limited time, but nothing, he held, is known tending to show any very lengthened chain of physical causes in such phenomena, succeeding regularly each to each, and necessarily



determined by prior physical facts in the natural evolution of the universe. Because men of science are intimately acquainted with a certain number of regular physical antecedents, they draw the conclusion that the phenomena previous to those which they have observed, will be found upon further examination to be equally regular. Dr Ward held, on the contrary, that the rough and ready conclusion of the uneducated mind, that a thing so variable as the weather, which has for so many years failed to evince obedience to any ascertainable laws such as would enable us to predict its changes long beforehand, is determined by a voluntary agent external to the sphere of regular physical causation, is quite as reasonable in itself as the other—nay, more reasonable, if it be correctly analyzed; and that prayers for rain and health, if their validity is on other grounds acknowledged, are in no way discredited by such limited regularity as has been observed in the course of the weather or of human disease. To bring his meaning into greater distinctness, he points to the uniform successions in a pianoforte, between the pressure on the note, the movement of the corresponding hammer, the vibration of the corresponding wire, and so forth, all which are perfectly regular, while, nevertheless, the first of the series is invariably set in motion by the external and free agency of the performer. If these regular successions are multiplied into hundreds, then the parallel becomes more complete; and, accordingly, to bring the principle vividly before his readers, Dr. Ward supposes an instrument with many such connecting links between the player's "premovement" and the resulting sound, and supposes a number of mice of philosophical tendencies to be shut up within it. The conclusion which in the infancy of science they had drawn—that the sounds were due to external agency—gradually becomes discredited as link after link of uniform succession is discovered. Elated by each fresh discovery, they look

forward to finding fixed laws determining the succession of tunes. The parallel is obvious; and Dr. Ward contends that the original conception of immediate free external action was nearer the truth than the later conception, which was based on an intimate acquaintance with the mechanical part of the action, but dropped out of sight the all-important originator of the series of movements.

The essay on "Implicit and Explicit Thought" is based, as appears in the essay itself, on Cardinal Newman's sermon on the same subject, preached many years ago at Oxford. The essay on "Certitude in Religious Assent" is a review of the same writer's *Grammar of Assent*.

I have not felt at liberty to make any material changes in the essays, and some of them, in consequence, necessarily bear marks of the special occasions for which they were written. The most that has been done by way of alteration—in addition to the necessary changes in the references from one essay to another—is the occasional omission of repetitions, serviceable in a review as explaining earlier stages of the author's argument to those who had not followed the course as a whole, but needless and tedious where the complete series is collected.

The arguments on which the author mainly built for establishing Theism were, first and foremost, that from the sense of moral obligation; and secondly, that from the existence of necessary truths which are, he considered, dependent for their necessity upon the nature of God, the one necessary Being. This argument he never developed; but it is curious to note that these two considerations are substantially identical with those two most important Kantian doctrines—of the categorical Imperative, and synthetic *a priori* truths. The argument from causation came next in his scheme. In the eighth essay he dwells strongly on the ineradicable idea which exists in the human mind, of causation as distinguished from mere

phenomenal sequence. This idea is most distinctly conceived, he considered, in personal action. The will's volition that the hand should rise—here is the clearest instance. The hand's action in knocking down an opposing object comes near to this in conveying the idea of the *influence* involved in causation ; and causes in external nature are conceived as causes, and not merely antecedent phenomena from their analogy to these personal experiences of causation. "Whatever commences to exist must have a cause" is the shape in which he held the causation axiom to be declared positively by the human mind as correctly analyzed, and hence it rises to the conception of the Self-Existent First Cause, which had no beginning. The design argument, the æsthetic argument, and others of a similar nature, were chiefly useful, in this scheme, as subsidiary, and indicating the intelligence and beauty of the Creator. He agreed with Mill that the design argument by itself fails to establish infinite power united with infinite goodness in the Author of Nature, indeed, he considered that the facts on which this argument is based point to some limit in one or the other ; and that the sphere of objective contradiction must probably be larger than has been generally supposed, which hypothesis would account for this apparent deficiency. That is to say, the number of things intrinsically impossible, or, to use Suarez's phrase, "*extra objectum omnipotentis*," might well, he thought, be far larger than is apparent to our limited intelligence and knowledge.

WILFRID WARD. ❷

# ESSAYS ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF THEISM.

## I.

### THE RULE AND MOTIVE OF CERTITUDE.\*

ENGLISH philosophers, for our present purpose, may be divided into two sharply contrasted classes, whom we may call objectivists and phenomenists respectively. The latter think that man has no knowledge whatever, except of phenomena, physical or psychical, nay, more correctly psychical alone:† whereas the former stoutly maintain that man has cognizance of objective truth. We desire to take our own humble part in this momentous controversy. We hope, firstly, to demonstrate by argument, that there exists a body of necessary truth cognizable by man, and, secondly, to consider particular portions of that truth, such as the intrinsic distinction between moral good and evil,

\* *La Philosophie Scolastique Exposée et Défendue.* Par LE R. P. KLEUTGEN, S. J. Paris Gaume

*An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* By JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, D. D., of the Oratory Third Edition London Burns, Oates & Co

*Essays Philosophical and Theological.* By JAMES MARTINEAU London Trübner & Co

*An Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy.* By JOHN STUART MILL Third Edition London Longmans

† It admits of "no doubt," pronounces Professor Huxley ex cathedra, "that all our knowledge is a knowledge of states of consciousness" ("Lay Sermons," p 373)

the axiom of causation, and the existence of God. We shall throughout consider Mr. Mill our chief antagonist; as being at once by far the ablest and by far the most highly esteemed of English phenomenists. We consider it, indeed, a singular benefit to the cause of truth, that we have to contend with one so singularly clear in statement, accessible to argument, and candid, or rather generous, towards opponents. And we should add, both as a farther benefit to truth and as a peculiar attraction to ourselves, that he is always so intensely in earnest; that he regards philosophy as no mere matter of otiose speculation, as no mere instrument of intellectual drill and intellectual excitement, but as all-important in its bearing on man's daily life and practice. But before joining direct issue with him, a preliminary question has inevitably a prior claim on our attention. We wish to prove that necessary truth is cognizable by man with certitude, but it is evidently impossible even to argue this question, until it is first agreed between him and ourselves what is the *test* of certitude, what are the conditions requisite and sufficient, that certitude may be established. To this preliminary question we must confine ourselves in our present essay.

The question itself may be stated thus. Orthodox philosophers—we must be permitted to use the term—have built up a large body of theological (we refer, of course, exclusively to *natural* theology), metaphysical, psychical, social, physical verities, resting on sustained processes of reason; and these processes of reason have been partly deductions from intuitive truths, partly inductions from experienced fact, partly various combinations of the two. But before any scientific trust can be reposed in these conclusions, a previous inquiry must be answered. How is a thinker to know that these assumed truths are intuitive; that these assumed facts have been experienced, that these deductive and inductive processes are really valid, or, in

other words, adapted to the inferring of true conclusions from true premisses ?

Phenomenists will at once throw off part of the difficulty, by saying that there are no intuitive truths to be assumed. But they in no respect lessen their difficulty by this allegation. They may deny to man all *other* intuitional faculties ; but they must still ascribe to him that intuitional faculty which is called *memory*, and which indubitably no less needs authentication than the rest. This is a point of quite central importance, and to which we beg our readers' most careful attention. The distinction is fundamental, between a man's power of knowing his *present* and his *past* experience. Certainly he needs no warrant to authenticate the truth of the former, except that present experience itself. To doubt my present inward consciousness, as Mr. Mill most truly affirms (p. 186), " would be to doubt that I feel what I feel." So far, then, the phenomenist and ourselves run evenly together ; but here we may come to a very broad divergence. " I am conscious of a most clear and articulate mental *impression* that a very short time ago I was suffering cold , " this is one judgment : " a very short time ago I was suffering cold , " this is another and totally distinct judgment. That I know my present *impression* by no manner of means implies that I know my past *feeling*.

We would thus, then, address some phenomenistic opponent. You tell us that all diamonds are combustible, and that the fact is proved by various experiments which you have yourself witnessed. But how do you know that you ever witnessed *any* experiment of the kind ? You reply that you have the clearest and most articulate *memory* of the fact. Well, we do not at all doubt that you have that present *impression*, which you call a most clear and articulate memory. But how do you know—how can you legitimately even guess—that the present *impression* corresponds with a past *fact* ? See what a tremendous assump-

tion this is, which you, who call yourself a cautious man of science, are taking for granted. You are so wonderfully made and endowed—such is your assumption—that in every successive case your clear and articulate *impression* and *belief* of something as past, corresponds with a past *fact*. You find fault with objectivists for gratuitously and arbitrarily assuming first principles: was there ever a more gratuitously and arbitrarily assumed first principle than your own?

You gravely reply,\* that you do *not* assume it as a first principle. You tell us you trust your present act of memory because in innumerable past instances the avouchments of memory have been true. How do you know—how can you even guess—that there is *one* such instance? Because you trust your present act of memory—no other answer can possibly be given. You are never weary of urging that *a priori* philosophers argue in a circle; whereas no one ever so persistently argued in a circle as you do yourself. You know forsooth that your present act of memory testifies truly, because in innumerable past instances the avouchment of memory has been true, and you know that in innumerable past instances the avouchment

\* What follows does not apply personally either to Mr Mill or Mr. Bain. The former, with that candour which characteristically distinguishes him, frankly confesses (p 203, note) that "our belief in the veracity of memory is evidently ultimate, no reason can be given for it which does not presuppose the belief and assume it to be well-founded." This admission was the more signally candid because Mr Mill must have seen that it furnishes his antagonists with a very powerful "argumentum ad hominem," of which indeed we hope to avail ourselves in our next essay. Mr Bain makes the same admission ("Deductive Logic," p 275). On the other hand, Professor Huxley ("Lay Sermons," p 359) says that "the general trustworthiness of memory" is one of those "hypothetical assumptions which cannot be proved or known with that highest degree of certainty which is given by immediate consciousness, but which, nevertheless, are of the highest practical value, inasmuch as the conclusions logically drawn from them are always verified by experience." The argument in the text applies directly to this view. Professor Huxley cannot legitimately even guess that *anything whatever* has been "verified by experience," unless he *first* knows that certain acts of memory testify truly.

of memory has been true, because you trust your present act of memory. The blind man leads the blind, round and round a "circle" incurably "vicious."

Remarks entirely similar may be made on the validity of the inductive process. The proposition, that all the diamonds, which *I have myself seen* consumed by fire, were at that moment combustible—of *this* proposition we can well understand phenomenists saying, that it requires no further authentication than the trustworthiness of my memory. But the proposition that *all* diamonds on earth are always combustible—or even that the very diamonds which I saw burned were combustible *one day earlier*—who can say that *this* proposition requires for its knowledge nothing more than experience? It is *inferred* from experience, and its truth cannot possibly be known by me, unless I first know the validity of the inferring process, whatever that process may be \*

Without at all prejudging, then, any question really at issue between objectivists and phenomenists as such, we may say that "primary truths" consist of two classes: viz. (1) primary *premisses*, and (2) the validity of one or more *inferring processes*. We may add, that the cognition of a primary truth as such is precisely what is called an "intuition." If these primary truths are guaranteed with certitude—but not otherwise—there is a stable foundation

\* Mr Bain admits *this* statement of ours as frankly as Mr Mill admitted the former "This most fundamental assumption of all human knowledge" is "expressed by such language as 'nature is uniform,' 'the future will resemble the past,' 'nature has fixed laws' . . . Without this assumption, *experience can prove nothing* . . . This *must be received without proof*" If we seem to offer any proof for it, we merely beg it in another shape" ("Deductive Logic," p 227)

In case any of our readers should think it doubtful whether it be absolutely necessary for phenomenists to assume as a separate principle the validity of their inferring process—Mr Mill, indeed, apparently does not account this necessary—we would point out (what will be very obvious as our essay proceeds) that no part whatever of our argument depends on this particular statement



for human knowledge in its entirety and totality. The inquiry, then, to be instituted is this. Firstly, what *characteristics* must be possessed by those truths, which the thinker may legitimately accept as primary? and secondly, *on what ground* does he know that the propositions are true which *possess* those characteristics? Or to express the same thing in F. Kleutgen's words (n. 263), firstly, what is the *rule* of certitude? and, secondly, what is its *motive*?

There never was any answer but one given to this question by Catholics, before the deplorable darkness spread abroad by Descartes over the whole region of philosophy. (1) Primary truths are those which the human intellect is necessitated by its constitution to accept with certitude, not as inferences from other truths, but on their own evidence: this is the *rule* of certitude. (2) These truths are known to be truths; because a created gift called the light of reason is possessed by the soul, whereby every man, while exercising his cognitive faculties according to their intrinsic laws, is rendered infallibly certain that their avouchments correspond with objective truth: this is the *motive* of certitude. "It is conceivable," says Professor Huxley ("Lay Sermons," p. 356), "that some powerful and malicious being may find his pleasure in deluding us, and in making us believe the thing which is not every moment of our lives." Quite conceivable, doubtless; but the light of reason makes man infallibly certain that such a supposition is absolutely contradictory to fact.

This is the doctrine accurately and carefully elaborated by F. Kleutgen in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th chapters of his Third Dissertation. "It is the light of reason which makes us certain of what the *sensus intimus* attests" (n. 263). "Proceeding from the facts furnished by experience, we advance to further knowledge by the principles of pure thought; but the truth of these principles and the reality of those facts are not certain to the mind, except

through the light of reason which is inherent in the human mind " (n. 264). " The mind in thinking by reason has the consciousness of possessing truth, so long as it knows the agreement [which exists] between its thoughts and those\* principles which we call the laws of thought " (n. 274). Since the creature's " faculty of knowledge is created and therefore limited, no creature can be infallible in this sense, that by his own strength he can judge of *everything* with certitude. In the creature infallibility is always united with fallibility, as being is united with not-being. Yet, just as the creature's being, though finite, is nevertheless true being, so his *infallibility*, though limited, is nevertheless real infallibility " (n. 277). " The principles wherewith we begin, the logical laws which we follow in deduction, are *infallible*, as the rule whereby we judge the truth of our experimental knowledge " (n. 278).\*

We may be allowed to call this doctrine the doctrine of intrinsic certitude. We would so call it, in order to distinguish it from those theories which rest certitude on some basis extrinsic to the mind itself; from Descartes's, *e.g.*, who rests it on the veracity of God; and from Lammennais's, who rests it on the consent of mankind. According to this, which we must be allowed to call the one Catholic doctrine on the subject, the mind's intrinsic light

\* We should not fail, however, to quote the important elucidation which F Klötgen subjoins " And that we may understand how little this prerogative [of partial infallibility] would justify human pride, let us observe the limits of that sphere within which [alone] it is ascribed to him. In our investigations we need experimental knowledge, not only in commencing our inquiries, but during their whole progress, especially when we would apply science to the conduct of life. Now, how many things are necessary in order to our arriving at full certitude by means of personal experience and other men's observations! What calm! what attentiveness! what impartiality! what efforts! what perseverance! How often it happens that a new observation, a more profound examination, an unexpected discovery, have ~~ever~~ thrown the most accredited systems by taking from them their basis! If, then, our age glorifies itself for its progress in the experimental sciences, men should not be unmindful at the same time of the lesson in humility which should be learnt from that very progress," etc .

declares the objective truth of whatever man's cognitive faculties subjectively avouch. Would we demonstrate that there are necessary verities? Would we demonstrate that this or that particular proposition is among this number? In either case it is requisite, and it is sufficient, to demonstrate that the human intellect, acting on the laws of its constitution, so declares. This is the foundation we wish to lay in our present essay for the controversy with Mr. Mill which is to follow. But before proceeding to vindicate its truth, we must guard against two possible misconceptions of our meaning.

In the first place, it is abundantly possible that men may *misinterpret* the avouchment of their intellect, and this, indeed, would constitute an important addition to the causes alleged by F. Kleutgen (see our preceding footnote) for their proclivity to error. Both schools of philosophy admit this. The objectivist says to his opponent, If you will only look fairly at this and that intellectual fact to which I draw your attention, you will not be able to deny that such and such is the declaration of your cognitive faculties. And the phenomenist is not slow in making a similar retort. We hope ourselves, indeed, in our next essay vigorously to illustrate this fact; we hope to show, by appealing to this, that, and the other mental experience, that phenomenists have not a leg to stand on, when they deny that their cognitive faculties declare the existence of necessary truth. What we are maintaining in *this* essay is, that such is the sole legitimate controversial ground; that the avouchment of man's cognitive faculties is his final and his infallible standard of truth.

But, secondly, we appeal to the mind's positive, not its negative constitution; or, in other words, we lay our stress on its *affirmations*, not on its *incapacities*. It does not follow, because the human mind cannot conceive a proposition, that such proposition may not be true; nay, that it

may not be most certain and inappreciably momentous. We express this qualification here, that we may distinctly explain the precise bearing of our main thesis; but we reserve our argument on the matter to a later part of our paper.

Our main thesis, then, is this. "Man's cognitive faculties, while acting on the laws of their constitution, carry with them in each particular case their own evidence of absolute trustworthiness. All human knowledge has its commencement in various truths, whether of memory\* or of other kinds, which are self-evidently known as true, each by itself, under the light of reason." It would, of course, be a contradiction in terms, if we professed to adduce direct arguments for this thesis; because such profession would imply that the self-evidence of these truths is a verity inferred from premisses, whereas the thesis itself states that the knowledge of one or other of them as self-evident is an absolutely essential *preliminary* to all inference whatever. But we will (1) adduce for it strong indirect argument; and (2) (which is much more important) suggest to our readers such mental experiments as shall (we trust) satisfy them of its truth. We state our indirect argument as follows.

Every one really knows that he knows something besides his present consciousness; that he has had this or that definite past experience; that through this or that moral or intellectual training he has arrived at this or that interior result; and the like. There are some few most singularly constituted men who, at particular moments of their life, persuade themselves that they *doubt* whether they

\* We are amazed that both Sir W Hamilton and Mr Mill concur in censuring Reid for his statement that "memory is immediate knowledge of the past" ("Mill on Hamilton," p 134) The statement seems to us not only indubitable, but even elementary, and we are sanctioned in this opinion by the high authority of Mr Martineau (vol II. pp 258-263) That which I immediately think of, in remembering, is surely my past experience. But the question is wholly irrelevant to our present purpose

possess such knowledge, and we will presently consider their case: for the moment, however, we will put them out of account. Speaking generally, then, every one knows that he knows something besides his present consciousness. But he *cannot* possess that knowledge, except through the exercise (past or present) of his cognitive faculties; and he cannot accept it as *being* knowledge and not delusion, except by knowing that the declarations of those faculties are true. Now, how can he know this? By the authentication of God? by the testimony of his fellow-men? But it is only by trusting the declaration of his cognitive faculties that he can know or even guess the existence of God and his fellow-men; and still more, that he can know or even guess what God and his fellow-men testify. Unless, therefore, his cognitive faculties authenticate *themselves*, they cannot be authenticated *at all*. And if they are not authenticated at all, no man on earth knows anything whatever, except his own experience of this particular moment. Than this there can be no more clenching *reductio ad absurdum*.

Passing now to the direct establishment of our thesis, we appeal to each man's consciousness in our favour. That which his faculties indubitably declare as certain, he finds himself under an absolute necessity of infallibly knowing to be true. I experience that phenomenon of the present moment, which I thus express. I say that I remember distinctly and articulately to have been much colder a few minutes ago when I was out in the snow, than I am now when sitting by a comfortable fire. Well, in consequence of this present mental phenomenon, I find myself under the absolute necessity of knowing that a very short time ago I *had* that experience which I now remember.

\* Professor Huxley may talk of "some powerful and malicious being," who "finds his pleasure in deluding me" and making me fancy what never happened; but I am abso-

lutely necessitated to know that I am under no such delusion in regard to this recent experience.\* And so with my other intellectual operations. My faculties pronounce that my present impression of colour differs from another of which I retain a distinct idea; or they pronounce that this trilateral figure which I distinctly image in my mind, is triangular; or when I see two strips of wood lying in an oblong box close together and parallel to the sides, my faculties pronounce that the one which reaches beyond the other is nearer than that to the further end of the box. In all these cases I am necessitated to know that which my faculties declare as true.

As we have already said, there are some few most singularly constituted persons who, when contemplating their own mental phenomena, become for the moment dizzy with self-inspection; seized with vertigo, as one may say, with gazing down the abyss: and these men persuade themselves that they do possess a power of distrusting their cognitive faculties. We would thus address such a sceptic, if we could obtain his attention. We appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober. You are giddy for the moment and beside yourself, like a man in liquor. If you would correctly appreciate your mental constitution, look back at some given period of your life, when your faculties

\* In a passage which we quoted in a previous note, Professor Huxley seems to say that the truth of what memory distinctly testifies is not known "with that highest degree of *certainty* which is given by immediate consciousness," but is nevertheless in the very highest degree *probable*. If we rightly understand him—with very great respect for his usual power and clearness of thought—we must nevertheless say that this seems to us the most unreasonable opinion on the subject which can possibly be held. If my memory may be trusted, those things which it distinctly testifies are known with most absolute certainty, if it cannot be trusted, its avouchment does not render them even remotely *probable*. Indeed, what can be more violently unscientific—from the standpoint of mere experimental science—than to assume without grounds, as even probable, the very singular proposition, that mental phenomena (by some entirely unknown law) have proceeded in such a fashion that my clear impression of the past invariably corresponds with my past experience?

were braced and in full play, not paralyzed by morbid introspection. You were engaged in that anxious commercial speculation, or in that important lawsuit, or you were taking measures to avert imminent gout. Had you at that time the power of doubting whether you had previously *entered* on that speculation, or *engaged* in that lawsuit, or *experienced* premonitory symptoms of gout? Or when your mother was at last pronounced out of danger, could you really prevent yourself from infallibly knowing that you *had* been anxious? Or had you really the power of doubting whether you had ever seen that sweet face before? You will reply perhaps—and indeed you are bound (we admit) in consistency to reply—that you have no reason to know you ever *were* in such circumstances; that you know nothing whatever about yourself, except your present consciousness. In that case we will practise on you a *future* experiment. Employ yourself in whatever most interests you; in studying mathematics or taking a part in glees. While you are so engaged, we will suddenly come up and seize you by the arm. Can you *now*, we will say, prevent yourself from infallibly knowing that a very short time ago you were immersed in mathematical study or engaged in singing that glee?

However, whether or no we would succeed in curing this monomaniac, is an irrelevant question. for that he *is* a mere monomaniac, and, moreover, that he has no real power of persevering in such scepticism, will be admitted by all our readers. For the consistent sceptic cannot possibly *be* a reader. He cannot understand one single sentence—unless, while *reading* the last words, he trusts his *memory* for the first. Now, if he trusts his memory so far as this, he has *pro facto* abandoned his sceptical position.

“ Phenomenists, then, as we have urged, act suicidally in disparaging the light of reason; for it is only by surrendering themselves to that light, and so trusting their memory,

that they can know anything whatever *about* phenomena. They are very much given, however, to such disparagement; and they are very fond of alleging certain supposed difficulties. I see a straight stick in the water, and my faculties (they urge) confidently pronounce that the stick is crooked; or if a cherry is placed on my crossed fingers, my faculties confidently pronounce that my hand is touched by *two* substances. It is apparently for some such reason that Mr. Mill lays so much stress on Berkeley's theory of vision. Men fancy themselves—such is Berkeley's theory—to see distance immediately; but in fact that conviction of distance is *an inference*, and no immediate judgment whatever. Now, we do not admit this theory except for argument's sake; and Mr. Abbott, in his little volume called "Sight and Touch," professes to disprove it.\* But we cannot at all agree with the latter writer, when he says (Preface) that if Berkeley's theory were admitted, "consciousness" would be proved "delusive" and "doubt must reign supreme:" for on the contrary—so far as the controversy with scepticism is concerned—we consider the question one of complete indifference. All these superficial difficulties are readily solved by resorting to a philosophical consideration, which is familiar to Catholics, though (strangely enough) we do not remember to have seen it in non-Catholic works. We refer to the distinction between what may be called "undoubting" and what may be called "absolute" assent.

By "absolute" assent we understand an assent so firm as to be *incompatible* with the co-existence of doubt: but by

\* The present writer has never given his mind to it, and has no bias whatever on either side. Dr M'Cosh ("Intuitions of the Mind," p 114, note) thinks Mr Abbott's argument sufficient for part, not the whole, of his conclusion. Mr Mill (p 300) considers that Mr Abbott has been conclusively answered by Professor Fraser in the *North British Review* for August, 1864. On the other hand, the *last* writer on the subject, Professor Huxley, takes part *against* Mr Mill and Professor Fraser. See *Macmillan's Magazine* for June, 1871, p 153.



"undoubting" assent we mean no more than that with which *in fact* doubt does not co-exist. Now, the mere undoubtingness of an assent does not at all imply any particular *firmness*, but arises from mere accident. For instance, a friend, coming down to me in the country, tells me that he has caught a sight of the telegrams as he passed through London, and that the Versailles government has possession of Paris. I had long expected this, and I assent to the fact without any admixture of doubt. In an hour or two, however, the morning paper comes in; and I find that my friend's cursory glance has misled him, for that the army has only arrived *close up to* Paris. The extreme facility with which I dismiss my former "undoubting" assent, shows how very far it was from being "absolute." Its true analysis, in fact, was no more than this "there is an *a priori* presumption that Paris is taken." But as no particular motive for doubt happened to cross my mind, I was not led to reflect on the true character of the assent which I yielded.

Now to apply this. Evidently it cannot be said that my cognitive faculties declare any proposition to be certainly true, unless they yield to that proposition "absolute" assent. But a moment's consideration will show that my assent to the crookedness of the stick or the duplicity of the cherry, may accidentally indeed have been undoubting, but was extremely far from being absolute. Its true analysis was: "there is an *a priori* presumption that the stick is crooked or that there are two objects touched by my fingers;" and this declaration of my faculties indisputably corresponded with objective truth. A remark precisely similar may be made on my putatively immediate perception of distances; and we may bring the matter to a crucial experiment by some such supposition as the following.

I am myself but youthful, whether in age or power of thought; but I have a venerable friend and mentor, in

whose moral and intellectual endowments I repose perfect confidence. I fancy myself to see a crooked stick, or to feel two touching objects ; but he explains to me the physical laws which explain my delusion, and I surrender it with the most perfect facility. He further expounds and demonstrates Berkeley's theory of vision ; and here, though I have a little more trouble with myself, yet after a short consideration I entirely acquiesce. He proceeds, however—let us suppose, for the purpose of probing the depth of my convictions—to tell me that I have no reason whatever for knowing that I ever experienced a certain sensation, which my memory most distinctly declares me to have experienced a very short time ago : or again, that, as to the particular trilateral figure which I have in my thoughts, I have no reason whatever for knowing it to be triangular, and that he believes it to have *five* angles. Well, first of all I take for granted that I have not rightly understood him. When I find that I *have* rightly understood him, either I suspect him (as the truth indeed is) to be simulating, or else (if I am too great an intellectual coward for this) I am reduced to a state of hopeless perplexity and bewilderment, and on the high-road to idiocy. So great is the distinction between merely “undoubting” and “absolute” assent, between my faculties testifying that there is an *a priori* presumption for some theory and their testifying that it is *certainly true*.

Another objection, raised by phenomenists, turns on the divergence which exists among objectivists, as to what their faculties do testify. Thus many men do not think themselves to intue any axiom of *causation* at all ; and of those who do allege such axiom, there are different schools, each differently analyzing it. Many, again, do not think themselves to intue the intrinsic distinction between moral good, and evil ; and among those who do recognize this distinction, there are differences which may in some sense be

called fundamental. This objection cannot, however, be maintained, unless its advocate first makes good a preliminary position. He must show that the difference, on which he insists, is a difference between what the intellect of different men declares, and not merely between what they *interpret* it as declaring. But we are perfectly confident that he cannot show this, for that it is not true. We shall examine the phenomena on which he relies when we come to treat the respective questions of morality and causality.

A third objection has been urged against us, founded on the indubitable fact that we may not, at this rudimental stage of our argument against phenomenists, assume the Creator's Veracity. Could not a mendacious creator, it has been asked—Professor Huxley's "powerful and malicious being who finds his pleasure in deluding" mankind—so have constituted the human intellect as that it should testify falsehood, and nevertheless have given men the same trust in its declarations which they *now* feel? We reply easily in the negative. To say that mendacious faculties can be infallibly known as trustworthy, is a contradiction in terms. No possible creator could any more achieve such a result than he could form a crooked straight line.

We have now, then, sufficiently illustrated our fundamental thesis, that every thinker infallibly knows each successive declaration of his faculties to be true. And we have also sufficiently illustrated the first explanation, which we appended to that thesis; viz. that what he can ultimately trust is the *declaration* of these faculties, and not his own *analysis* thereof. We proceed to the second qualification which we made at starting. We appeal, we said, to the mind's positive, not its negative constitution: we cannot admit that what is inconceivable is therefore untrue. We side here with the vast majority of phenomenists,\* against

\* Mr Herbert Spencer is, we believe, the only exception, and that on grounds of his own which we need not here consider

certain objectivists; but we believe that our divergence from the latter is exclusively verbal. They say, e.g., that no trilateral figure is quadrangular, and that two straight lines never enclose a space, because in either case the supposition is *inconceivable* but what they intend is, that such supposition *contradicts* what I know as true, by my very conception of a trilateral figure or a straight line. We think it, however, a real calamity that they have used the expression which we criticize, because it permits such writers as Mr. Mill to rest contented with a most inadequate apprehension of the objectivist argument.

In justice, however, to these writers, we must distinguish carefully between two different senses of this word "inconceivable;" and this procedure will lead us into what our readers may at first be tempted to suppose a digression, but which they will ultimately find to be no digression at all. Sometimes the word "inconceivable" is taken to mean "unimaginable," at other times "unintelligible" or "unthinkable." Now, there is a large class of unimaginable things, which are by no means unthinkable, and no objectivist ever alleged that the *unimaginableness* of a proposition is incompatible with its truth. We may express the distinction in Mr. Martineau's words; though we are not aware that this most able philosopher has ever adopted the particular formula which we are criticizing, of *inconceivableness* being conclusive against truth. Ideas, he says (vol. i. p. 193), may be clear and thinkable, which "do not come before the *imaginative* or *representative* faculty." "You may deny the idea of the 'infinite,'" he adds (p. 194), "as not clear: and clear it is not, if nothing but the *mental picture of an outline* deserve that word. But if a thought is clear when it sits apart without danger of being confounded with another, when it can exactly keep its own in speech and reasoning with forfeit and without encroachment—if, in short, logical clearness consists not in the idea of a limit

but in the limit of the idea, then no sharpest image of any finite quantity . . . is clearer than the thought of the infinite." And so at p. 205, the author contrasts an "idea of the reason" with "one of the *phantasy*." "It is no objection," he adds (p. 238), "to either the reality or the legitimacy of a thought, that it is not of a kind to be brought before the mind's eye." So Dr. M'Cosh. "The thinking, judging, believing power of the mind is not the same as the imaging power" ("*Intuitions*," p. 195, note). Similarly speaks Mr. Mill from the opposite school. Take the case of some large number: suppose, *e.g.*, it were said that over a certain tract of ground there had been counted 27,182,818 potatoes. It is simply impossible to have this number in my *phantasy* or *imagination*, so as to distinguish it from 27,182,817 and 27,182,819. Yet says Mr. Mill (p. 100), "We have a" sufficient "*conception* of it, when we have conceived it by some one of its modes of composition, such as that indicated by the position of its digits." This "limited conception enables us to avoid confounding the number in our calculations with any other numerical whole;" and we can also "by means of this attribute of the number ascertain and add to our conception as many more of its properties as we please." In other words, this large number is most easily *thinkable*, though by no means *imaginable*.

This distinction, between propositions *imaginable* and propositions only *thinkable*, is in some degree correspondent, though not precisely so, with a distinction made by F. Newman, between what he characterizes respectively as "real" and "notional" assent.\* He adds, also, this obvious qualification, that multitudes of men, from indolence or other causes, give no more than a "notional" assent to

\* He thinks, however (p. 48), that men cannot have even a "notional" apprehension of a very large number, such as a billion or a trillion. We are certainly disposed to dissent from him on this small episodic question.

propositions most easily "imaginable." And this circumstance, as F. Newman emphatically repeats in various passages, is often a very serious moral or intellectual calamity.

Now, as we have said, those objectivists against whom we are now arguing, undoubtedly used the word "inconceivable" to express not "unimaginable," but "unthinkable." We are led, then, to consider whether any proposition can (in this sense) be truly called inconceivable, except those which actually *contradict* what is known by my very conception of their "subject." If there are none such, then our only quarrel with these philosophers will be, that their language understates the *positiveness* with which man's cognitive faculties declare certain propositions to be necessarily false. But we think there are propositions which may most fitly be called inconceivable and unthinkable, yet which all Theists regard as indubitably true. We refer to religious *mysteries*.\*

Let us begin with an illustration, which has often been given by F. Newman. It is most easily supposable that there may be rational creatures to whom, as being incorporeal themselves, the union of soul and body is a veritable mystery. If it were revealed to them—or, again, if it were deducible from premisses with which they were acquainted—that the soul of man is on one hand spiritual and indivisible, while on the other hand it is integrally present throughout every particle of an extended body, such a

\* It is said in Goeschler's "Dictionary of Catholic Theology" (article "Mysteries"), that theologians are extremely far from accord in their acceptation of this word. F. Perrone ("De Verâ Religione," prop 3) uses it substantially in the same sense with F. Newman, and we ourselves so adopt it in the text. F. Franzelin, however (see *eg* "De Deo Trino," thess xvii.), employs the word quite otherwise, viz to designate those truths which can in no sense be intrinsically established by reason, either before or after their revelation. But it is very difficult indeed to find a substitute for the word, as expressing F. Perrone's and Newman's idea whereas F. Franzelin may most easily express his by a phrase which also he often uses, viz. "superrational verities"

proposition would be inconceivable to them. It would be inconceivable, in what Mr. Mill calls (p. 90) "the proper sense" of the term: it would be "that which the mind is unable to put together in a representation." Their first impulse would be to think that it is a contradiction in terms.\* But subsequent consideration might bring to their mind that, as F. Newman expresses it ("Grammar," p. 44), their "notion" of a thing so entirely external to their experience "may be"—nay, is almost sure to be—"only partially faithful to the original;" that the word "presence" may have a far wider sense than any which they can ever so distantly apprehend. That their *notions*, therefore, of subject and predicate are more or less mutually contradictory, is no proof whatever that there is incompati-

\* "The soul is not only one, and without parts, but, moreover, as if by a great contradiction even in terms, it is in every part of the body. It is nowhere, yet everywhere. No part of a man's body is like a mere instrument, as a knife or a crutch might be, which he takes up and may lay down. Every part of it is part of himself, it is connected into one by his soul, which is one. Supposing we take stones and raise a house, the building is not *really* one, it is composed of a number of separate parts, which viewed as collected together we call one, but which are not one except in our notion of them. But the hands and feet, the head and trunk, form one body under the presence of the soul within them. Unless the soul were in every part, they would not form one body, so that the soul is in every part, uniting it with every other, though it consists of no parts at all. I do not, of course, mean that there is any real contradiction in these opposite truths, indeed, we know there is not, and cannot be, because they are true, because human nature is a fact before us. But it is a contradiction *when put into words*, we cannot so express it as not to involve an apparent contradiction, and then, if we discriminate our terms, and make distinctions, and balance phrases, and so on, we shall seem to be technical and artificial and speculative, and to use words without meaning. What (we should ask) was the meaning of saying that the soul had no parts, yet was in every part of the body? what was meant by saying it was everywhere and nowhere? how could it be one, and yet repeated, as it were, ten thousand times over every atom and pore of the body, which it was said to exist in? how could it be confined to the body at all? how did it act upon the body? how happened it, as was pretended, that when the soul did but will, the arm moved or the feet walked? how can a spirit, which cannot touch anything, yet avail to move so large a mass of matter, and so easily, as the human body? These are some of the questions which might be asked, partly on the ground that the alleged fact was impossible, partly that the idea was self-contradictory." (F. Newman's Oxford "Parochial Sermons," vol iv pp 325-328)

bility between the *archetypes* of those notions. And <sup>we</sup> human beings indeed, in *this* case, are so well aware of the ludicrous mistake which would be made by these immaterial creatures if they reasoned otherwise, that we are mightily tempted to forget how prone we are ourselves in other instances to a similar paralogism.

A proposition, then, may be called "mysterious" to some given thinker, when it would be rightly accounted by him self-contradictory, if he supposed that the notions which it conveys to him adequately represent their *archetypes*. It should be carefully observed, however, that his faculties themselves convey to him an assurance of his notions *being* thus utterly inadequate, and of no contradictoriness being therefore necessarily involved in the proposition itself. And it is further worth pointing out, that such mysterious propositions may nevertheless give real—possibly, therefore, vitally important—information; though it would carry us too far from our theme, if we here enlarged on this truth.

Now, as the union of soul and body might be utterly inconceivable to certain immaterial creatures, however strong their evidence for the fact, so there are various propositions concerning God, rigidly demonstrable by human reason, which are nevertheless inconceivable to the human intellect. That He Who is absolutely Simple and Indivisible, is present throughout all space, that He in Whom is no succession of time, is ever diversely energizing; that in God there is no real distinction whatever between His Nature and His Acts,—here are propositions at once humanly demonstrable and humanly inconceivable. We should add that no mysteries added by revelation are *more* inconceivable than those irresistibly authenticated by reason.\*

\* We earnestly hope we shall not be understood to characterize all propositions concerning God as inconceivable. God, in most of His aspects,



Mr. Mill excellently explains (p. 82) why it is abundantly possible that such inconceivable propositions may be true. "The inference" that "what we are incapable of conceiving cannot exist," "would only be warrantable if we knew *a priori* that we must have been created capable of conceiving whatever is capable of existing; that the universe of thought and that of reality must have been formed in complete accordance with each other. . . . But an assumption more destitute of evidence could scarcely be made; nor can one easily imagine any evidence that would prove it, unless it were revealed from above."\*

We implied, a few pages back, that a proposition is necessarily false which contradicts what is known by my very conception of its "subject." We should here explain that this does not at all conflict with what we have just been saying about mysteries. The reason is this. When the archetype is apprehended by me as indefinitely transcending my *conception* thereof, various propositions are not "known by its very conception," which otherwise *would* be.

We have given, then, two reasons for deeply regretting the phrase used by many objectivists, that what is inconceivable is necessarily false. Firstly, even if no proposition could be called "inconceivable" except that which

can be apprehended by man (to use the common phrase) though not comprehended. Accordingly a great majority of the propositions concerning Him are readily conceivable, thinkable, intelligible, though not comprehensible in all the fulness of their meaning, while some few are inconceivable as explained in the text. Nothing *eg* in the world conveys a more intelligible and practical idea than the affirmation that God is Loving, Veracious, Omniscient, Omnipotent, Holy. The same distinction applies to *revealed* propositions concerning Him. F Newman (pp 120-137) considers those various statements which combine to express the dogma of the Blessed Trinity, and in a very masterly way determines which of these statements admit of "real," and which of only "notional" assent.

\* We were much disappointed on coming, a few pages later (p 119, note), to Mr Mill's disparagement of "mystical metaphysics" and "mystical theology," for there cannot be a better defence of "mystical metaphysics" than the passage quoted in the text.

actually *contradicts* what is known by my very conception of its "subject," still it was extremely to be desired that a stronger expression than "inconceivable" should be used to express this. But, secondly, the word "inconceivable" may very naturally be understood as applying to every "mystery;" and if it be so understood, all Theists know that certain "inconceivable" propositions are demonstratively true.

Here, then, we sum up. Our direct thesis has been, that whatever men's cognitive faculties indubitably declare, is thereby known to be infallibly true. To prevent misconception, however, we have added two explanations. (1) This infallibility appertains to what they *declare*, not to what they may be *understood* as declaring; and (2) it appertains to their positive declarations, and not to their incapacities. Now, since Mr. Mill is to be our principal opponent in various succeeding essays, it is absolutely necessary, before we conclude, to see how far we are in harmony with *him* on this preliminary question. We are hereafter to argue against him, that the existence of necessary truths is cognizable with certitude by mankind; but in order to discuss this with any satisfactory result, it is extremely momentous that he and ourselves should arrive at an agreement as to what constitutes a sufficient *test* of certain knowledge. And we shall be able, on our side, to make our position clearer if we begin by distinguishing it from a ground importantly different, which has been occupied by more than one English non-Catholic objectivist.

Mr. Martineau, indeed—whom, notwithstanding extreme theological divergence and some serious philosophical separation, we cannot but recognize as at once the ablest and most learned of these—entirely agrees with ourselves (if we rightly understand him) on the question we have been discussing. "We have entire faith," he says (vol. i. p. 241),

"in the veracity and the consistency of the reports given in by our highest faculties." And he uses similar expressions in pp. 47, 48, 101, 232, 237. He says again, pointedly (p. 104), "be the proof what it may which authenticates the belief, it is the faculty in the last resort which authenticates the proof." Yet even as to Mr. Martineau, we wish he had spoken more uncompromisingly. "Our faculties," he says (p. 238), "must be either taken at their word, or *dismissed as cheats*." We wish he had expressly said what he evidently holds, viz. that it is physically impossible to "dismiss them as cheats" or to doubt their declaration. It is a very serious loss to metaphysical science that Mr. Martineau has never found time for writing a systematic treatise.

Dr. M'Cosh, in his most valuable work on "the Intuitions of the Mind," speaks as strongly as F. Kleutgen himself, on one part of our subject, viz. the *rule* of certitude. He maintains emphatically that whatever the human faculties avouch is infallibly certain *as* they avouch it. The capacity of cognition in the mind, he says (p. 17), "is not that of the bent mirror to reflect the object *under modified forms*, but of the plane mirror to reflect it *in its proper shape and colour*. The truth is *preserved* by the mind, not *formed*; it is *cognized*, not *created*." But when question arises on the  *motive* of certitude, he often seems to turn off into a different groove. He often partakes, in fact, the error of Descartes, and implies that my reason for knowing the veracity of my mental constitution is my previous conviction of God's Veracity. See third edition, pp. 30, 113, 116: see also p. 333, where his remarks are singularly unsatisfactory. In fact, we suspect that this view possesses, more or less systematically and consciously, not a few speculative minds of non-Catholic England. Yet surely never was there an error more suicidal; and Mr. Mill in a few pregnant words utterly explodes it. We quote the

passage with a few verbal changes (pp. 161, 162), and we italicize two sentences.

"If the proof of the trustworthiness of our faculties is the veracity of the Creator, on what does the Creator's veracity itself rest? Is it not on the evidence of our faculties? The Divine veracity can only be known in two ways. (1) By intuition, or (2) through evidence. If it is known by intuition, it is itself an immediate declaration of our faculties, and *to have ground for believing it we must assume that our faculties are trustworthy. . . .* If we hold that God is not known by intuition but proved by evidence, that evidence must rest in the last resort on the immediate declaration of our faculties. Religion thus, itself resting on the evidence of our faculties, cannot be invoked to prove that our faculties ought to be believed. *We must already trust our faculties before we can have any evidence of the truth of religion*"

We are bound in fairness to add that Dr. M'Cosh, in his "Examination of Mr. Mill's Philosophy" (p. 54), expresses full concurrence with this reasoning.

Dean Mansel has undoubtedly conferred important benefits on philosophy, and we hope in our succeeding essays to profit largely by his labours. Yet we must frankly say that, on the matter discussed in our present essay, his doctrine differs from Dr. M'Cosh's, signally for the worse. He concurs with that writer in holding that God's Veracity is my reason for regarding my faculties as in any sense trustworthy; but he considers that argument as availing, not for the conclusion that their declaration is always true, but only that they are not so utterly mendacious as to be the mere "instruments of deception." "We may believe, and we ought to believe," he says ("Prolegomena Logica," p. 81), "that the powers which our Creator has bestowed upon us are not given as *instruments of deception. . . .* But in believing this we desert the evidence of Reason to rest on that of Faith." According to this view, I could not know or even guess that my faculties are not mere instru-

ments of deception, except for my belief that they are given by God. But *on what ground* do I believe that they are given by God? Because they by their exercise lead me to that conclusion. But how do I know that, in thus leading me, they are not mere instruments of deception? Because they were given me by God? But how do I know that they were given me by God? And so on with a vicious circle *ad infinitum*.

We would only add here, to prevent possible misconception of our meaning, that God's Veracity is undoubtedly a most legitimate philosophical premiss for the establishment of any conclusion, which is not *itself* required as a premiss for the demonstration of God's Veracity. For our own part, we think that a consideration of God's Attributes might with advantage be much oftener employed in philosophical argument than is commonly the case. But this by the way.

We are now, then, to consider how far we may count on Mr. Mill's agreement with ourselves, in holding that the genuine declaration of man's faculties is in every case infallibly true. It is by no means so easy to answer this question confidently as might at first be supposed. At p. 152, indeed, he seems to speak unmistakably in our sense. "The verdict of . . . our immediate and intuitive conviction is admitted on all hands to be a decision without appeal." Again, in p. 166: "As regards almost all, if not all philosophers," he says—and by his very phrase he implies that *he* at all events is no dissentient—"the questions which divided them have never turned on the veracity of consciousness."\* What Sir W. Hamilton "calls the *testimony* of consciousness to something beyond itself, may be and is denied; but what is denied has almost

\* If should be explained that here and elsewhere he adopts under protest Sir W. Hamilton's use of the word "consciousness," to express not merely "self-consciousness," but man's intuitive faculty

always been that consciousness gives the testimony, *not that if given it must be believed.*" In the preceding page, he says that no philosopher, not even Hume or Kant, had "dreamed of saying that we are compelled by our nature to believe" error. At page 161, note, he cites with approval Mr. Stirling's excellent statement, that it is the business of man's cognitive faculties to consider carefully what it is which they themselves declare: and adds, pointedly and justly (p. 166), that "we certainly do not know by intuition what knowledge is intuitive."

Yet, in p. 171, he introduces a very ominous qualification of this doctrine. Men should only accept, it seems, "what consciousness," i.e. their intellect, "told them *at the time when its revelations were in their pristine purity.*" There are "mental conceptions which become so identified in thought with all our states of consciousness, that we seem and *cannot but seem* to receive them by direct intuition." (Ib.) Some thinkers (p. 177) "may be personally quite incapable of not holding" a fundamental error. "We have no means of interrogating consciousness," i.e. our intellect, "*in the only circumstances* in which it is possible for it to give a trustworthy answer" (p. 172). "Something *which we now confound with* consciousness may have been altogether foreign to consciousness *in its primitive state*" (p. 185). He seems really to distinguish between the *primitive* and the *adult* state of man's cognitive faculties. He seems to imply that the laws of man's mental constitution are changed during his progress from infancy to manhood; and that it is to their earlier, not their later, declarations that we are to look for authentication of truth.

We cannot believe that Mr. Mill really intends this; and we will, therefore, for the moment content ourselves with a brief reply to his possible meaning. We will ~~say~~ say this, then. If the laws of man's mental constitution do really change in his progress from infancy to manhood,

then never was there a philosophical proposition more preposterously unfounded than that assumed by Mr. Mill throughout, viz. that man's *primitive* faculties testify truth. On what ground does an adult trust his faculties? We know of no other answer than we gave in an earlier part of our essay. In each individual case he finds himself necessitated to know infallibly what his faculties indubitably declare as certain; and he generalizes this by degrees into the universal proposition that they are veracious. But all this applies to his *adult*, not his *primitive*, mental constitution; and if the former in any respect contradicts the latter, his reasoning so far does not apply to the latter at all. Mr. Mill professes, as strongly as we do, that no knowledge or experience is possible, unless the thinker first trust the distinct declarations of his *memory*. Is it only, then, the clear declarations of man's *primitive* memory which Mr. Mill accounts self-evidently true?

For ourselves we cannot but entirely agree with Mr. Mill's critic, whom he mentions in his note to p. 173. We think it would be "contrary to all analogy," if man's cognoscitive faculties did not need and did not receive, as time advances, "development and education."

An argument, precisely resembling the above, applies *a fortiori* to a view which Mr. Mill ascribes (p. 175, note) to Mr. Herbert Spencer: viz. that "our primary forms of thought" are in many cases "inherited by us from ancestors by the laws of the development of organization," and need not, therefore, correspond with objective truth. It is plain—we may observe in passing—that such a theory applies no less to *memory* than to man's other cognitive faculties; and the view thus stated impresses us as indicating the lowest point of speculative degradation at which "the progress of thought" has yet arrived. We should add, however, that all readers of Mr. Spencer are unanimous in accounting him a writer of rare subtlety and genius.

Returning to Mr. Mill, we cannot persuade ourselves that he really means what he seems to say ; that he really regards man's mental constitution as undergoing a change between infancy and maturity, in such sense that its declarations of a later period can possibly contradict those of an earlier. Nor, again, do we interpret a singular expression in his "Logic," as indicating a real difference between him and ourselves, on what has been the theme of this article. Yet we cannot refrain from adverting to that expression. He says (vol. II. pp. 97-98, seventh edition) that "the truth of a belief" would not follow even from an "irresistible necessity" of entertaining it ; and that mankind might conceivably be "under a permanent necessity of believing what might possibly not be true." But though Mr. Mill here speaks very obscurely, we understand him as referring to a certain imaginary state of things, which *might* have existed, and not as denying that *in fact* man's reason infallibly authenticates its own authority. It seems to us, from his language in both works, that Mr. Mill has failed indeed (as we should estimate the matter) in clearly and consistently apprehending and bearing in mind the true doctrine ; but that he has never intended to advocate a different one in preference. We shall take for granted, therefore, in our next essay, unless we are admonished of being mistaken, that the controversy between him and ourselves turns in no respect on the *authority* of man's faculties, but exclusively on their *vouchment*.

On the other hand, we fully admit that again and again inferences are so readily and imperceptibly drawn as to be most easily mistaken for intuitions ; and that, in arguing hereafter against Mr. Mill, we shall have no right of alleging aught as certainly a primitive truth, without *proving* that it cannot be an opinion derived inferentially from experience. It is our strong impression that this, and no more, is what Mr. Mill intends to urge in the



distinction which he draws between the primitive and the adult avouchment of men's faculties.

We think so highly of F. Newman's philosophical acumen, that it would not be fair if we did not in conclusion place before our readers a passage in which he apparently gives the weight of his authority to a different view from that which we have supported throughout this essay :—

Sometimes our trust in our powers of reasoning and memory, that is, our implicit assent to their telling truly, is treated as a first principle, but we cannot properly be said to have any trust in them as faculties. At most we trust in particular acts of memory and reasoning. We are sure there was a yesterday, and that we did this or that in it, we are sure that three times six is eighteen, and that the diagonal of a square is longer than the side. So far as this we may be said to trust the mental act by which the object of our assent is verified, but, in doing so, we imply no recognition of a general power or faculty, or of any capability or affection of our minds over and above the particular act. We know indeed that we have a faculty by which we remember, as we know we have a faculty by which we breathe, but we gain this knowledge by abstraction or inference from its particular acts, not by direct experience. Nor do we trust in the faculty of memory or reasoning as such, even after that we have inferred its existence, for its acts are often inaccurate, nor do we invariably assent to them.

However, if I must speak my mind, I have another ground for reluctance to speak of our trusting memory or reasoning, except, indeed, by a figure of speech. It seems to me unphilosophical to speak of trusting ourselves. We are what we are, and we use, not trust our faculties. To debate about trusting in a case like this is parallel to the confusion implied in wishing we had had a choice if we would be created or no, or speculating what I should be like if I were born of other parents. "*Proximus sum egomet mihi.*" Our consciousness of self is prior to all questions of trust or assent. We act according to our nature, by means of ourselves, when we remember or reason: We are as little able to accept or reject our mental constitution as our being. We have not the option; we can but misuse or mar its functions. We do not confront or

bargain with ourselves, and therefore I cannot call the trustworthiness of the faculties of memory and reasoning one of our first principles (pp. 58-59).

We cannot doubt that these comments are aimed by F. Newman at opinions entirely similar to those of this essay, which were advocated by Dr. Ward in his "Philosophical Introduction." We heartily concur, however, with the first of the two paragraphs, as all will have seen who have read our remarks; nor did Dr. Ward express himself otherwise in his work. Of F. Newman's *second* paragraph we confess ourselves unable to apprehend the bearing; though very probably our inability to do so arises from some narrowness of intellectual vision. We can hardly be mistaken, however, in saying that the objection is directed against our method of *expressing* our doctrine, and not against that doctrine itself; and we will beg our readers to give F. Newman's comment their attentive consideration.

In our present essay, then, we have maintained that whatever man's cognitive faculties indubitably declare as certain is thereby known to be infallibly true. In our next we are to maintain against Mr. Mill that there is no one thing which they *more* indubitably declare as certain than the existence of necessary verities.

## II.

### MR. MILL'S DENIAL OF NECESSARY TRUTH.\*

MR. MILL has set an excellent example, in singling out an individual writer (Sir W. Hamilton) as his special opponent. Even those philosophers who are most nearly agreed, differ from each other so considerably in their exposition of doctrine, that an antagonist who attempts to answer them all directly is unable to exhibit the full strength of his case. If he replies to them successively, he becomes tedious; if he encounters them collectively, he must use much vagueness and indistinctness of expression. A far more satisfactory issue will be reached, if he singles out for conflict one in particular; nor will he thereby be prevented from adding such supplementary remarks as may be necessary for a complete exposition of his view. All which he need consider is, that the particular opponent whom he selects may both be, and receive general *recognition* as being, a worthy representative of the adverse school. If MR. MILL did well in this respect by choosing Sir W. Hamilton, much more shall *we* do well by choosing Mr. Mill.

In one respect, it is both easier and more hopeful to deal with phenomenists than with their extreme opposites, the transcendental pantheists. Phenomenists appeal honestly

\* *An Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy* By JOHN STUART MILL. Third Edition. London Longmans.

*A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive.* By JOHN STUART MILL. Seventh Edition. London Longmans.

and consistently to the one legitimate standard, the observed facts of human thought; and there is therefore a really appreciable prospect of conducting our argument against them to some definite result.\* But Mr. Mill in particular is a more satisfactory opponent than any other of his school, in proportion as, more distinctly than any other of their number, he points to the precise psychical facts on which he would build, and the precise conclusion which he would infer from each. His singular power of clear exposition, of making easier what is difficult, of throwing light on what is obscure, benefits doubtless his own cause in the first instance, as is but fair: yet ultimately it greatly assists his antagonist; or rather assists the cause itself of truth, whatever that may be: and there is no other cause, we are thoroughly convinced, which he ever knowingly *desires* to promote. He is never led, by any latent consciousness of a weak point, to seek refuge in veiling his sense under a cloud of words; but on the contrary has no other aim in his language, than that of making himself as intelligible as he can. Then again there is no other phenomenist who has carried out philosophical principles into nearly so large a field of practical application; and this is a farther advantage to the cause of truth. We cannot indeed admit that he is, in the fullest sense of that word, a *consistent* thinker; we cannot *e.g.* admit that his utilitarianism is the true philosophical correlative to that generous self-sacrificing philanthropy which is so attractive a feature in his character, and which so often exposes him to the charge of visionary enthusiasm.† But he is almost entirely free from those

\* "The man who seeks to enter the temple of Philosophy by any other approach than the vestibule of psychology, can never penetrate into its inner sanctuary, for psychology alone leads to and evolves philosophical truth, even though it is itself subordinate to philosophy. Moreover he who attempts to construct psychology by the aid and under the direction of a metaphysical system, contradicts the order by which both psychology and philosophy are developed and acquired." (Porter on the Human Intellect, p. 60)

† For ourselves we are so profoundly convinced of the intense social evils

express and (one may even say) verbal self-contradictions, of which he has pointed out so many in Sir W. Hamilton ; and even those of his works which are least philosophical, are evidently written under a vivid remembrance of his philosophical tenets. So far therefore as self-contradiction exists below the surface—as is, we think, by no means unfrequently the case—such a fact is a most legitimately available weapon against him in controversy.

The corner-stone of his system is that which we are to oppose in our present essay ; his denial that there is any truth cognizable by man as “necessary.” Were he once to admit that there is any one truth thus cognizable—his works might still be admitted to contain a large mass of good philosophical matter, as we think indeed they do—but his philosophy *as a whole* would be at an end. On such an hypothesis, we say, its whole framework and structure would be proved rotten ; its materials, however valuable in themselves, would have to be detached and rearranged ; and his edifice would have to be reconstructed from its very foundation. It is amply sufficient then, if we establish in our present essay that there is at least *one* cognizable class of necessary truths. By this means we shall have concluded the question of *principle*, and shall leave no more behind than the question of comparative detail, what *are* those propositions which justly vindicate to themselves that title. We will leave to future essays this question of comparative detail ; concerning ourselves here only with the question of principle. Since therefore we are to choose some special field whereon to join issue as a specimen of the rest,—there is one particular class of truths, which will

which result, here in England and in Europe generally, from the Church's loss of political pre-eminence, that we are by no means disposed to dub a man visionary and enthusiastic, for the mere offence of advocating very fundamental social changes. Yet we do charge Mr Mill with visionary enthusiasm for expecting real social amelioration from such remedies as those, which alone, consistently with his principles, he can propose.

be generally accepted as in every respect most fitted to effect a clear and salient result. Our direct argument shall be, that *mathematical truths* are cognizable by mankind as necessary.

This issue, again, may be still further narrowed. Mr. Mill will not of course deny that, if mathematical *axioms* be necessary, the validity of syllogistic reasoning must be also a necessary verity; and that the whole body of mathematical truth must possess the same character. Our thesis then shall be, that mathematical axioms (arithmetical, algebraic, geometrical) are self-evidently necessary truths. By the term "*axioms*," for the purpose of our present essay, we understand those verities which mathematicians assume as indubitably true, and use as the first premisses of their science. And we are to assume the doctrine for which we argued in our first essay, viz. that whatever a man's cognitive faculties indubitably declare, is known by him to be infallibly true.

We have elsewhere expressed our own suggestion, on the true analysis of that idea "*necessary*," which is to be the theme of our present essay. The idea itself, however, is so pronounced and unmistakable, that every thinking person understands its meaning in a certain vague but practically sufficient way. Our present purpose accordingly will lead us only to attempt such a delineation and embodiment of this idea, as shall make clear the point at issue between Mr. Mill and all objectivists. When we call a proposition "*necessary*" then, we mean to say that its contradictory is an intrinsically impossible chimera; is that which could not be found in any possible region of existence; is that which even an Omnipotent Being\* would be unable to effect. And in order to show that the human mind cognizes certain self-evidently necessary truths, we begin by putting

\* We must not of course, in this rudimental stage of our argument against Mr. Mill, assume that there is an Omnipotent Being.

out of court "tautologous" propositions—those which declare no more than has already been expressed in the subject: for concerning *them*, of course, Mr. Mill himself admits that their truth is known independently of experience; and mathematical axioms are not of their number. Our controversy with Mr. Mill is concerned, not with these "tautologous," but with what may be called "significant" propositions; with propositions which declare something not expressed in their subject. And our allegation is this. There is many a "significant" proposition, such that, to use F. Kleutgen's words, "by simply considering the *ideas* of the subject and the predicate, one comes to see that there really exists between them that relation which the proposition declares":\* and every such proposition is self-evidently known as necessary.

Firstly then we say, that if there *are* such propositions, they are self-evidently necessary. Or we may express the same truth somewhat differently. If in any case I know, by my merely thinking or conception of some ens, that a certain attribute, not *included* in that conception, is truly predicable of that ens, such predication is a self-evidently necessary proposition. Take for instance the axiom, that all trilateral figures are triangular. If, by my very conception of a trilateral figure, I know its triangularity,—and if (as we established in our first essay) the avouchment of my faculties corresponds infallibly with objective truth,—then I know infallibly that a trilateral non-triangular figure is an intrinsically repugnant chimera; that in no possible region of existence could such a figure be found; that not even an Omnipotent Being could form one. All these are obvious and undeniable consequences of the fundamental

\* F. Kleutgen explains, that such propositions are called by Kant "synthetical," but by Catholic philosophers "analytical" (Phil. Scol., n. 300). We believe that all non-Catholic philosophers without exception follow Kant's usage in this matter and it will be more convenient therefore if we avoid the term altogether.

proposition, that, by my very conception of a trilateral figure, I know its triangularity: and to admit therefore this fundamental proposition, is to admit that the triangularity of all trilateral figures is cognizable as a self-evidently necessary truth.

If this reasoning be admitted, what is our controversial position? In such case—taking the above-named axiom as our specimen instance,—all which we have to maintain against Mr. Mill is, that, by my very conception of a trilateral figure, I know that the attribute triangularity is predicable of every such figure. But we do not see how it is possible to make clearer so very clear a proposition; and our direct business therefore is merely to answer Mr. Mill's objections.

For these, we naturally turn in the first instance to his special philosophical work, his "Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy." He treats the question from p. 318 to 326; and purports to account for the phenomena on which objectivists build, by what he calls "the association psychology." By this term he denotes that psychological theory which alleges that man's *belief* in necessary truth does not authenticate any corresponding *reality*, but results from past uniformity in the association of ideas. All my life long I have been seeing trilaterals which are triangular, while I have had no one experience to the contrary. So inseparable an association then—thus Mr. Mill argues—has been established in my mind between the ideas of trilateralness and triangularity, that I am deluded into the fancy of some *a priori* connection between them, independent of what is known by experience; I am deluded into the fancy, that by my very conception of a trilateral figure I know its triangularity. We shall have, as we proceed, to consider this argument in detail; but we will at once urge against it what seems an irrefragable argument *ad hominem*.



According to Mr. Mill, my having constantly experienced the triangularity of trilateral figures, is merely one out of a thousand sets of instances, in which I have observed the unexceptional uniformity of the laws of nature. There is no other experimental truth whatever, he thinks, which rests on nearly so large a mass of experience, as does this truth, that phenomena succeed each other in uniform laws.\* To this universal uniformity, "we not only do not know any exception, but the exceptions which limit or apparently invalidate the special laws, are 'so far from contradicting the universal one that they confirm it.'" ("Logic," vol. ii. p. 104.) Now the fact of my having constantly experienced triangularity in trilateral figures, suffices (according to Mr. Mill) for my having knit the ideas of trilateralness and triangularity into such inseparable association that I delusively fancy one to be involved in my very conception of the other. Much more certainly therefore—so Mr. Mill in consistency should admit—I must have knit into such inseparable association the two ideas, "phenomena" and "succeeding each other by uniform laws," that I necessarily fancy one to be involved in my very conception of the other. If, through my constant experience of triangular trilaterals, I am under a practical necessity of fancying that in every possible region of existence all trilaterals are triangular—much more, through my constant experience of uniformity in phenomenal succession, must I be under a practical necessity of fancying, that in every possible region of existence phenomena succeed each other by uniform laws. Now *am* I under any such necessity, or under any kind of approach to it? We summon the defendant into court as witness for the plaintiff. "I am convinced," he says ("Logic," vol. ii. p. 98), "that *any one* accustomed to

\* To prevent possible misapprehension, we should explain that we are arguing entirely *ad hominem*. We do not ourselves admit that the uniformity of nature is a truth, which experience by itself would suffice to establish.

abstraction and analysis, who will fairly exert his faculties for the purpose, will . . . *find no difficulty* in conceiving that in some one, for instance, of the many firmaments into which sidereal astronomy now divides the universe, events may succeed one another at random without any fixed law." Put these two statements then together. I find insuperable difficulty against fancying, that in any possible "firmament" there can be non-triangular trilaterals; but I find no difficulty whatever against fancying, that in many a possible "firmament" phenomena succeed each other without fixed laws. Yet I have *experienced* the uniformity of phenomenal succession (according to Mr. Mill) very far more widely, and in no respect less unexceptionally, than I have experienced the triangularity of trilaterals. The impossibility therefore which I find in believing the non-triangularity of any possible trilateral, cannot be in any way imagined to arise from constancy of experience. In other words, Mr. Mill's psychological principle breaks down.

We will now proceed to consider in order Mr. Mill's course of argument, from p. 318 to p. 325; stating it as far as possible in his own words. He begins thus:—

It is strange that almost all the opponents of the Association psychology should found their main or sole argument in refutation of it upon the feeling of necessity; for if there be any one feeling in our nature which the laws of association are obviously equal to producing, one would say it is that. Necessary, according to Kant's definition, and there is none better, is that of which the negation is impossible. If we find it impossible, by any trial, to separate two ideas, we have all the feeling of necessity which the mind is capable of. Those, therefore, who deny that association can generate a necessity of thought, must be willing to affirm that two ideas are never so knit together by association as to be practically inseparable. But to affirm this is to contradict the most familiar experience of life. Many persons who have been frightened in childhood can never be alone in the dark without irrepressible terrors. Many a person

is unable to revisit a particular place, or to think of a particular event, without recalling acute feelings of grief or reminiscences of suffering. If the facts which created these strong associations in individual minds had been common to all mankind from their earliest infancy, and had, when the associations were fully formed, been forgotten, we should have had a necessity of thought—one of the necessities which are supposed to prove an objective law, and an *a priori* mental connection between ideas. (pp 318, 319.)

We have always thought this passage to be among the weakest which Mr. Mill ever wrote. 'Firstly, the two instances which he gives in no way exemplify a necessity of *thought*, but only a necessity of *feeling*, the feeling of fear in solitary darkness, and of grief in revisiting a particular place or in thinking of a particular person. Now many wild theories have doubtless been maintained by considerable persons; but who in the world ever alleged, that a necessity of *feeling* "proves an objective law and an *a priori* mental connection between ideas"? \*

But a more important fallacy remains to be mentioned. Mr. Mill's whole reasoning turns on the phrase, "necessity of thought;" and yet he has used that phrase in two senses fundamentally different. A "necessity of thought" may no doubt be most intelligibly understood to mean, "a law of nature whereby under certain circumstances I *necessarily think* this, that, and the other judgment." But it may also be understood to mean, "a law of nature whereby I *think as necessary* this, that, and the other

\* In the first of the two instances Mr Mill might possibly be understood to mean, that the timid person, so long as solitude and darkness remain, actually *believes* the presence of some danger. Even if this were psychologically true, it would plainly be nothing to Mr Mill's purpose. But Mr Mill does not really think it at all certain that there is even this temporary belief. "The emotion of fear may be excited, and I believe often is excited simply by terrific imaginations. That these imaginations are even for a moment mistaken for menacing realities, may be true, but ought not to be assumed without proof." (J. S Mill's edition of Mill's "Analysis," vol. 1. p. 408.)

judgment." Now we heartily agree with Mr. Mill, that from a "necessity of thought" in the *former* sense, no legitimate argument whatever can be deduced for a necessity of objective truth. Supposing I felt unusually cold a few moments ago; it is a "necessity of thought" that I shall now *remember* the circumstance: yet that past experience was no necessary truth. It is a "necessity of thought" again, that I expect the sun to rise to-morrow: and many similar instances could be adduced. The only "necessity of thought" which proves the self-evident necessity of objective truth, is the necessity of thinking that such truth is self-evidently necessary.

This paragraph then exhibits from first to last a simple "ignoratio elenchi," such as we should not have expected from a writer like Mr. Mill. He proceeds, however, to say most truly, that Dean Mansel is a far more effective opponent of phenomenism than Sir W. Hamilton; and accordingly, when he proceeds to answer *that* philosopher, he puts forth far greater strength than in the earlier paragraphs. Since we are here to enter on the most critical part of our controversy, we must begin with first distinctly setting forth (which we have not hitherto done) Mr. Mill's own theory, on the kind of certitude with which men hold the truth of mathematical axioms, and on the *ground* of that certitude.

This doctrine may be stated as follows. "I know the fact that all trilaterals are triangular, just as I know the fact that all wood floats on the water and that all stones sink therein. I have seen in my life a vast number of trilateral figures, and I have found them all triangular; all other men have had the same experience; and the same laws of induction, which prove that throughout the sphere of human observation wood floats on the water, prove also that throughout the sphere of human observation trilaterals are triangular. Whether either of these two propositions

is true 'in distant parts of the stellar regions' ("Logic," vol. ii. p. 108), is a question on which I cannot form even a reasonable conjecture." \*

For our own part we are confident, that the repugnance against this theory which will instinctively rise up in every intelligent mind—Mr. Mill himself admits that there *is* in the first instance this instinctive repugnance—is founded on reasoning much deeper than Mr. Mill's. Still when thinkers of such power as Mr. Mill and some of his supporters advocate a paradoxical thesis, the paradox must not be left to sink by its own weight, but must be assailed by explicit argument.

Now we shall not here consider the question one way or other, whether—supposing *reason* did not prove mathematical axioms true in every possible region of existence—*experience* could by itself suffice to prove them true throughout the reach of *human observation*. Our purpose is to maintain the utter falsehood of the above hypothesis; to maintain that mathematical axioms are known by the light of reason to be self-evidently necessary. Dean Mansel has supported this view, to our mind, with absolutely irrefragable arguments. And we must do Mr. Mill the justice

\* We think Mr Mill will admit that we have truly stated his theory, yet we will give a few references to his works. Mathematical axioms ("Logic," vol 1 p 258) "are experimental truths generalizations from observation" "The reverse of the most familiar principles of arithmetic and geometry might have been made conceivable even to our present mental faculties, if those faculties had co-existed with a totally different constitution of external nature" (On Hamilton, pp 85, 86, note) "We should probably be as well able to conceive a round square as a heavy square, if it was not that in our uniform experience at the instant when a thing begins to be round, it ceases to be square" (Ib p 85) See also "Logic," vol 1. pp 259, 283. In vol 1 p 350, Mr Mill speaks somewhat unexpectedly "That a straight line is the shortest distance between two points," he says, "we do not doubt to be true even in the region of the fixed stars" But we do not see how to reconcile this with his statement (vol 11 p 108) that "it would be folly to affirm confidently" that "the special laws which we have found to hold universally on our own planet" prevail "in distant parts of the stellar regions," and that "it would be idle to attempt to assign any" "probability" to such a supposition We shall return to this in the text.

to say, that he has given so fair a representation of those arguments that we have no wish to cite them except as they stand in Mr. Mill's own pages. We will place therefore before our readers a long extract from the "Examination of Hamilton," which will exhibit in close context the Dean's reasoning and Mr. Mill's attempted reply. The passage follows almost immediately that which we *last* extracted ; and the *italics* are ours.

Mr. Mansel joins a distinct issue with the Association psychology, and brings the question to the proper test. "It has been already observed," he says in his "Prolegomena Logica," "that whatever truths we are compelled to admit as everywhere and at all times necessary, must have their origin, not without, in the laws of the sensible world, but within, in the constitution of the mind itself. Sundry attempts have, indeed, been made to derive them from sensible experience and constant association of ideas, but this explanation is refuted by a criterion decisive of the fate of all hypotheses it does not account for the phenomena. It does not account for the fact that *other associations, as frequent and as uniform, are incapable of producing a higher conviction than that of a relative and physical necessity only*"

This is coming to the point, and evinces a correct apprehension of the conditions of scientific proof. If other associations, as close and as habitual as those existing in the cases in question, do not produce a similar feeling of necessity of thought, the sufficiency of the alleged cause is disproved, and the theory must fall. Mr. Mansel is within the true conditions of the Psychological Method.

But what are these cases of uniform and intimate association, which do not give rise to a feeling of mental necessity? The following is Mr. Mansel's first example of them. "I may imagine the sun rising and setting as now for a hundred years, and afterwards remaining continually fixed in the meridian. Yet my experiences of the alternations of day and night have been at least as invariable as of the geometrical properties of bodies. I can imagine the same stone sinking ninety-nine times in the water, and floating the hundredth, but my experience invariably repeats the former phenomenon only."\*

\* We would ourselves rather say "I do not fancy myself to cognize any intrinsic repugnance in the notion that the sun, after rising and setting for a

The alternation of day and night is invariable in our experience, but is the phenomenon day so closely linked in our experience with the phenomenon night, that we never perceive the one, without, at the same or the immediately succeeding moment, perceiving the other? That is a condition present in the inseparable associations which generate necessities of thought. Uniformities of sequence, in which the phenomena succeed one another only at a certain interval, do not give rise to inseparable associations. There are also mental conditions, as well as physical, which are required to create such an association. Let us take Mr Mansel's other instance, a stone sinking in the water. We have never seen it float, yet we have no difficulty in conceiving it floating. But, in the first place, we have not been seeing stones sinking in water from the first dawn of consciousness, and in nearly every subsequent moment of our lives, as we have been seeing two and two make four, intersecting straight lines diverging instead of inclosing a space, causes followed by effects and effects preceded by causes. But there is a still more radical distinction than this. No frequency of conjunction between two phenomena will create an inseparable association, if counter-associations are being created all the while. If we sometimes saw stones floating as well as sinking, however often we might have seen them sink, nobody supposes that we should have formed an inseparable association between them and sinking. We have not seen a stone float, but we are in the constant habit of seeing either stones or other things which have the same tendency to sink, remaining in a position which they would otherwise quit, being maintained in it by an unseen force. The sinking of a stone is but a case of gravitation, and we are abundantly accustomed to see the force of gravity counteracted. Every fact of that nature which we ever saw or heard of, is *pro tanto* an obstacle to the formation of the inseparable association which would make a violation of the law of gravity inconceivable to us. Resemblance is a principle of association, as well as contiguity and however contradictory a supposition may be to our experience *in hac materiâ*, if our experience *in aliâ materiâ* furnishes us with types even distantly resembling what the supposed phenomenon would be if realized, the associations thus formed will generally prevent the specific association from becoming so intense and irresistible, as to

hundred years, shall remain fixed in the meridian, or that the stone shall float the hundredth time"

disable our imaginative faculty from embodying the supposition in a form moulded on one or other of those types.

Again, says Mr Mansel, "experience has uniformly presented to me a horse's body in conjunction with a horse's head, and a man's head with a man's body, just as experience has uniformly presented to me space inclosed within a pair of curved lines and not within a pair of straight lines". yet I have no difficulty in imagining a centaur, but cannot imagine a space inclosed by two straight lines.\* "*Why do I, in the former case, consider the results of my experience as contingent only and transgressible, confined to the actual phenomenon of a limited field, and possessing no value beyond it, while, in the latter, I am compelled to regard them as necessary and universal? Why can I give in imagination to a quadruped body what experience assures me is possessed by bipeds only? And why can I not, in like manner, invest straight lines with an attribute which experience has uniformly presented in curves?*"

I answer —Because our experience furnishes us with a thousand models on which to frame the conception of a centaur, and with none on which to frame that of two straight lines inclosing a space. Nature, as known in our experience, is uniform in its laws, but extremely varied in its combinations. The combination of a horse's body with a human head has nothing, *primâ facie*, to make any wide distinction between it and any of the numberless varieties which we find in animated nature. To a common, even if not to a scientific mind, it is within the limits of the variations in our experience. Every similar variation which we have seen or heard of, is a help towards conceiving this particular one, and tends to form an association, not of fixity, but of variability, which frustrates the formation of an inseparable association between a human head and a human body exclusively. We know of so many different heads, united to so many different bodies, that we have little difficulty in imagining any head in combination with any body. Nay, the mere mobility of objects in space is a fact so universal in our experience, that we easily conceive any object whatever occupying the place of any other, we may imagine without difficulty a horse with his head removed, and a human

\* Here again we would ourselves rather say, "I do not consider myself to cognize any intrinsic repugnance in the notion that a centaur should exist, but I do consider myself to cognize intrinsic repugnance in the notion that two straight lines should enclose a space"



head put in its place. But what model does our experience \* afford on which to frame, or what elements from which to construct, the conception of two straight lines inclosing a space? There are no counter-associations in that case, and consequently the primary association, being founded on an experience beginning from birth, and never for many minutes intermitted in our waking hours, easily becomes inseparable. Had but experience afforded a case of illusion, in which two straight lines after intersecting had appeared again to approach, the counter-association formed might have been sufficient to render such a supposition imaginable, and defeat the supposed necessity of thought. In the case of parallel lines, the laws of perspective do present such an illusion: they do, to the eye, appear to meet in both directions, and consequently to inclose a space. and by supposing that we had no access to the evidence which proves that they do not really meet, an ingenious thinker, whom I formerly quoted, was able to give the idea of a constitution of nature in which all mankind might have believed that two straight lines could inclose a space. That we are unable to believe or imagine it in our present circumstances, needs no other explanation than the laws of association afford, for the case unites all the elements of the closest, intensest, and most inseparable association, with the greatest freedom from conflicting counter-associations which can be found within the conditions of human life.

In all the instances of phenomena invariably conjoined which fail to create necessities of thought, I am satisfied it would be found that the case is wanting in some of the conditions required by the Association psychology, as essential to the formation of an association really inseparable (pp. 320-325)

The first remark which we would make on this carefully elaborated passage, is in itself of some importance. Mr. Mill distinctly admits that there is a real difference between the kind of conviction wherewith I accept those truths which an objectivist accounts necessary, and those truths which he accounts contingent.\* Mr. Mill of course attempts to explain this difference in some way consistent

\* It can hardly be needful to explain that by "contingent" we simply mean "not necessary"

• with his theory : but the admission which he so candidly makes is none the less observable.

Next we would point out, how importantly he misunderstands the objectivist position. In his view the objectivist appeals, not to the human reason, but to the human imagination; and argues that some given mathematical axiom is self-evidently necessary, on no other ground than that men are incapable of *imagining* to themselves its contradictory. Nor do we deny, as we have already implied, that Dean Mansel's language gives our author much excuse for his misapprehension; though we are convinced that the Dean had no such meaning as Mr. Mill supposes. I am to the full as incapable of *imagining* that mutual action of material particles which is called gravitation, as of imagining a quadrangular trilateral: yet I do *not* regard the former, while I *do* regard the latter, as intrinsically impossible. What an objectivist really alleges is, that the truth of any given mathematical axiom is known to me by my very conception of its subject; and consequently that, under the light of reason, I infallibly cognize that axiom as a self-evidently necessary truth. We have in an earlier part of our essay set forth this argument. The only answer, given to it by Mr. Mill in the above extract, rests on the united force of two allegations. If either of these allegations be untrue, the whole answer breaks down; while for ourselves we are confident that *both* of them are untrue. The first is, that men never account any proposition self-evidently necessary, except one which they have repeatedly for an indefinite period observed by *experience* to be true. The second allegation is, that whenever two phenomenal facts are undeviatingly and unmistakably experienced in union, a thinker almost inevitably is deluded into the fancy that there is some *necessary* connection between them. We will reply to these two allegations, in the order in which we have introduced them.

First, then, we confidently deny that every truth, ordinarily accounted necessary, has been very frequently *observed* as true by him who thus accounts it. Take the very instance we have so often given. It is probable enough that I have very often seen trilateral figures; but have I often, consciously or unconsciously, observed the fact that they are *triangular*? Our impression is, that very few men observe this fact at all, except those given to mathematical study. A youth of fifteen years old is beginning to learn geometry; and his tutor points out to him, that every trilateral figure is triangular. Does he naturally reply, "Of course it is,—I have observed it a thousand times"? On the contrary, we believe that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the proposition will be entirely new to him; and yet (notwithstanding its novelty) will at once commend itself as self-evidently a necessary truth.\* But there are many cases in which the student has had no *opportunity* for previous observation. We wonder how many men there are, who have even *once* experienced the fact, that  $2 + 9 = 3 + 8$ . At all events the testimony given by every student will be this. I am told by my teacher that  $2 + 9 = 3 + 8$ . In order to show me that the fact is so, he does not dream of referring me to my past experience, but recommends a fresh purely mental experiment. He tells me, *e.g.*, to fancy myself holding two pebbles in one hand and nine in the other, and then transferring one pebble from the larger to the smaller group. I thus cognize that in every possible region of existence  $2 + 9 = 3 + 8$ : and I arrive easily indeed at the more general proposition, that, in every possible region of existence,  $(a + 1) + (b - 1) =$

\* "A mathematical friend told me he perfectly well remembered when a boy being taught without understanding it the axiom 'Two straight lines cannot inclose a space' When the fourth proposition of Euclid was shown him, he remembers the universality and necessity of the axiom at once flashing on him." (Mahaffy's Translation of Fischer's Commentary on Kant, introduction, p ix)

$a + b$ ; where  $a$  and  $b$  are any whole numbers whatever. Here is a large generality regarded by me as a self-evidently necessary truth, where no one can possibly say that the truth has been long and constantly experienced. And innumerable similar instances may be given, as is most obvious.

Secondly, we no less confidently deny Mr. Mill's *second* allegation, that the mere constant experience of two phenomenal facts in union leads men almost inevitably to fancy some necessary connection between the two. There is a certain phenomenon, constantly experienced by the inhabitants of this cold climate during far the greater portion of the day, throughout nearly three quarters of every year: we refer to the warmth-giving property of fire. Every Englishman has more frequent experience of this, than he has even of two and two making four, or of things equal to the same equalling one another. Nor is there any exception whatever to this property: there is no observed substance, which is brought near fire without its warmth being increased. Yet we see no intrinsic repugnance whatever in the notion, that in some other region of existence a substance may be found, which in every *other* respect resembles earthly fire—in consumption of coal or wood, in destroying or melting this or that other portion of matter—and yet which does *not* possess this particular property of imparting warmth. Nor again do I see any intrinsic repugnance whatever in the notion, that here upon earth, through preternatural agency, on one or other occasion fire may fail to impart warmth. I have never even once experienced the equality of  $2 + 9$  to  $3 + 8$ , and yet am convinced that not even Omnipotence could overthrow that equality. I have most habitually experienced the warmth-giving property of fire, and yet see no reason for doubting that Omnipotence (if it exist)\* can at any time suspend or

\* We must again remind our readers that, in this early stage of our argument with Mr Mill, we are not at liberty to assume the *existence* of an Omnipotent Being.

remove that property. That which I have *never* experienced, I regard as *necessary*; that which I have *habitually and unexceptionally* experienced, I regard as *contingent*. Most certainly therefore mere constant and uniform experience cannot possibly account—as Mr. Mill thinks it does—for the mind's conviction of self-evident necessity.

There is another different road, by which we may no less securely travel to the overthrow of Mr. Mill's theory. Necessary truths may be most clearly distinguished from those merely physical, by one simple consideration. Putting aside the propositions of psychology, with which we are not here concerned,—the philosopher learns *experimental* truths no otherwise than by observing *external nature*; but he learns *self-evidently necessary* verities by examining *his own mind*. A proposition is discerned to be self-evidently necessary, whenever (once more to use F. Kleutgen's expression) “by simply considering the ideas of the subject and predicate, one comes to see that there exists between them that relation which the proposition expresses.” So I judge it self-evidently necessary, that “the disobedience of a rational creature to his Holy Creator's command is morally wrong;” that “malice and mendacity are evil habits;” that “ $a + b = (a - 1) + (b + 1)$ ;” that “all trilateral figures are triangular.” That these various propositions are not cognized by me as *experimental* truths, is manifest (we say) from one simple consideration; for in forming them, I have not been ever so slightly engaged in observing external nature, but exclusively in noting the processes of my own mind. We are not here to consider the two first of the above-recited propositions; but at all events, as regards *mathematical axioms*, no one can possibly say that they are *psychological* affirmations. Since therefore they are ascertained by a purely mental process, and yet are no psychological propositions, they cannot be experimental truths at all.

Now, in his "Examination of Hamilton," Mr. Mill apparently denies that the truth of any proposition (not tautological) can be known by my mere conception of its subject. But in his "Logic" he admits distinctly, that I *may* thus cognize the truth of *geometrical axioms*. These are his words:—

In the first place, it is said that if our assent to the proposition that two straight lines cannot inclose a space were derived from the senses, we could only be convinced of its truth by actual trial, that is, by seeing or feeling the straight lines, whereas in fact it is seen to be true by merely thinking of them. That a stone thrown into water goes to the bottom, may be perceived by our senses, but mere thinking of a stone thrown into the water would never have led us to that conclusion, not so, however, with the axioms relating to straight lines. If I could be made to conceive what a straight line is, without having seen one, I should at once recognize that two such lines cannot inclose a space. Intuition is "imaginary looking", but experience must be real looking. If we see a property of straight lines to be true by merely fancying ourselves to be looking at them, the ground of our belief cannot be the senses, or experience, it must be something mental.

To this argument it might be added in the case of this particular axiom (for the assertion would not be true of all axioms), that the evidence of it from actual ocular inspection is not only unnecessary but unattainable. What says the axiom? That two straight lines *cannot* inclose a space, that after having once intersected, if they are prolonged to infinity they do not meet, but continue to diverge from one another. How can this, in any single case, be proved by actual observation? We may follow the lines to any distance we please, but we cannot follow them to infinity for aught our senses can testify, they may, immediately beyond the farthest point to which we have traced them, begin to approach, and at last meet. Unless, therefore, we had some other proof of the impossibility than observation affords us, we should have no ground for believing the axiom at all.

To these arguments, which I trust I cannot be accused of understating, a satisfactory answer will, I conceive, be found, if

we advert to one of the characteristic properties of geometrical forms—their capacity of being painted in the imagination with a distinctness equal to reality, in other words, the exact resemblance of our ideas of form to the sensations which suggest them. This, in the first place, enables us to make (at least with a little practice) mental pictures of all possible combinations of lines and angles, which resemble the realities quite as well as any which we could make on paper, and in the next place, make those pictures just as fit subjects of geometrical experimentation as the realities themselves, inasmuch as pictures, if sufficiently accurate, exhibit of course all the properties which would be manifested by the realities at one given instant, and on simple inspection, and in geometry we are concerned only with such properties, and not with that which pictures could not exhibit, the mutual action of bodies one upon another. The foundations of geometry would therefore be laid in direct experience, even if the experiments (which in this case consist merely in attentive contemplation) were practised solely upon what we call our ideas, that is, upon the diagrams in our minds, and not upon outward objects. For in all systems of experimentation we take some objects to serve as representatives of all which resemble them, and in the present case the conditions which qualify a real object to be the representative of its class, are completely fulfilled by an object existing only in our fancy. Without denying, therefore, the possibility of satisfying ourselves that two straight lines cannot inclose a space, by merely thinking of straight lines without actually looking at them, I contend, that we do not believe this truth on the ground of the imaginary intuition simply, but because we know that the imaginary lines exactly resemble real ones, and that we may conclude from them to real ones with quite as much certainty as we could conclude from one real line to another. The conclusion, therefore, is still an induction from observation. And we should not be authorized to substitute observation of the image on our mind, for observation of the reality, if we had not learnt by long-continued experience that the properties of the reality are faithfully represented in the image; just as we should be scientifically warranted in describing an animal which we had never seen from a picture made of it with a daguerreotype, but not until we had learnt by ample experience, that observation of such a picture is precisely equivalent to observation of the original.

These considerations also remove the objection arising from the impossibility of ocularly following the lines in their prolongation to infinity. For though, in order actually to see that two given lines never meet, it would be necessary to follow them to infinity, yet without doing so we may know that if they ever do meet, or if, after diverging from one another, they begin again to approach, this must take place not at an infinite, but at a finite distance. Supposing, therefore, such to be the case, we can transport ourselves thither in imagination, and can frame a mental image of the appearance which one or both of the lines must present at that point, which we may rely on as being precisely similar to the reality. Now, whether we fix our contemplation upon this imaginary picture, or call to mind the generalizations we have had occasion to make from former ocular observation, we learn by the evidence of experience, that a line which, after diverging from another straight line, begins to approach it, produces the impression on our senses which we describe by the expression "a bent line," not by the expression "a straight line" ("Logic," vol 1 pp 261-264)

The reply to Mr. Mill's attempted solution of the difficulty is so obvious, that one wonders he can have missed it; and we have implicitly given it in an earlier part of this essay. He admits, it will have been seen, so much as this. I have formed in my mind the idea of a straight line; and by merely contemplating this idea, I may arrive with absolute certainty at a conviction, that no two straight lines can inclose a space. Now let us suppose for argument's sake—the question is quite irrelevant—that my idea of a straight line was derived in the first instance from some physical object which I had observed. At all events I include no other property in my idea of a straight line, than those properties which appertain to every straight line found in any possible region of existence. If therefore, by contemplating my idea of a straight line, I may know certainly that two straight lines cannot inclose a space, this cognition of mine extends to all straight lines which can be found in any possible region of existence. Mr. Mill then will in consistency be obliged to admit, that in no possible



region of existence can two straight lines inclose a space; and that human thinkers know with certitude this impossibility. In other words, he will in consistency be obliged to admit the very proposition against which he is arguing; viz. that this mathematical axiom is known with certitude as a necessary truth.

But indeed it is quite curious to observe how many openings Mr. Mill has left for criticism in the extract we just now gave. Thus, according to him, I must take two successive steps on my way to the conclusion, that earthly trilateral figures are triangular. First, I observe that the picture I form in my mind of a straight line has a close resemblance to earthly straight lines; secondly, I satisfy myself by mental experimentation that every figure made up of three such straight lines, is triangular; then, thirdly, I infer that earthly trilateral figures inclusively are triangular. Now every one who looks carefully at the matter will see, that the first of these propositions does not at all inflow into the last by way of proof, but is simply and utterly superfluous. Yet it is this first proposition alone, which has so much as the semblance of appealing to *experience*, as any part whatever of my reason for holding that trilateral figures are triangular.

Then (2)—whereas Mr. Mill purports to account for man's power of ascertaining axioms by mere mental experience—he bases that power on “one of the characteristic properties of *geometrical* forms.” But in so arguing, he has entirely left out of account *arithmetical* and *algebraic* axioms. I have fully as much power of arriving by mental experimentation at the knowledge that “ $(a - 1) + (b + 1) = a + b$ ,” as of arriving at the knowledge that “all *trilaterals* are triangular;” yet here there is no question at all of “forms” which can be “painted in the imagination with a distinctness equal to the reality.”

(3) “In all systems of experimentation,” says Mr. Mill,

"we take some objects to serve as representatives of all that resemble them; and in the present case [that of geometrical axioms] the conditions which qualify a real object to be the representative of its class, are completely fulfilled, by an object existing only in our fancy." This view when drawn out will run as follows. If I observe that one single stone sinks in the water by its own weight, I legitimately conclude that *all* stones so sink: and yet objectivists themselves admit, that my knowledge of this general proposition is derived entirely from experience.\* In like manner—so Mr. Mill argues—if I observe that one mentally pictured trilateral figure is triangular, I can doubtless legitimately infer that all trilaterals have the same property and yet objectivists are bound in consistency to admit, that this fact does not negative the supposition, that my knowledge of this general truth may be derived entirely from experience. But *why*, we ask, do I conclude, from the case of one stone, to the case of all stones? Mr. Mill himself gives as the reason, that experience has conclusively proved *the uniformity of nature*, and certainly, unless this uniformity were proved in one way or another, we should proceed most illogically in arguing from the case of one stone to the case of all. Mr. Mill then is here in effect contradicting the very conclusion which he takes for granted. He takes for granted, that geometrical axioms can be securely ascertained by purely mental experimentation; and yet he implies that they can *not* be ascertained, until by experience of the physical world men have learnt the uniformity of nature. •

(4) To explain our next criticism, we will once more bring into juxtaposition two sentences of Mr. Mill's which we have already adduced. "That a straight line is the shortest distance between two points," Mr. Mill "does not doubt to be true even in the region of the fixed stars."

\* Objectivists do *not* admit it; but let this pass for the present.

("Logic," vol. i. p. 350.) Yet (vol. ii. p. 108) "it would be folly," in his opinion, "to affirm confidently" that "in distant parts of the stellar regions, where phenomena may be entirely unlike those with which we are acquainted," "those special laws" prevail, "which we have found to hold universally in our own planet." To hold otherwise, he thinks, would be "to make a supposition without evidence, and to which it would be idle to attempt to assign any probability." Which of these two conflicting statements represents Mr. Mill's real mind? We can have no doubt that the *second* does so. It would be a blunder, of which thinkers far less clear-sighted than Mr. Mill could not be guilty with their eyes open, to say that mathematical axioms are mere "generalizations from observation" ("Logic," vol. i. p. 258), and yet that a man can know them to hold good externally to the reach of *possible* observation. Mr. Mill then considers it impossible to know, or even to guess, whether "in the more distant parts of the stellar regions" there may not be quadrangular trilaterals, and pairs of straight lines each pair inclosing a space.

Yet, in the extract before us, he alleges confidently that two divergent straight lines will *never* meet. Let us concede that experience can tell that they will not meet within *the reach of human observation*. But what possible reason can he consistently allege for even *guessing* that they may not meet, after they have passed beyond human ken and entered those inaccessible "distant parts of the stellar regions"?

We believe that a careful observer would detect many more parallogisms in the extract on which we have been commenting; but our readers will have had enough of this particular passage.

The only other argument which we can call to mind, as having been adduced by Mr. Mill against the self-evident necessity of mathematical axioms, occurs in an earlier part of his volume on Sir W. Hamilton; p. 87, note. He has

avowedly adopted this argument from another contemporary writer, who has pressed into his service Reid's "Geometry of Visibles:" and the argument itself may be thus stated. "If mankind had possessed only the sense of sight and not that of touch, they would have accounted it a self-evidently necessary truth that every straight line being produced will at last return into itself, and that any two straight lines being produced will meet in two points." Consequently, such is Mr. Mill's implied inference, men's knowledge of geometrical axioms depends, not on the immediate and peremptory declaration of their cognitive faculties, but on their possessing the sense of touch.

We must here say one preliminary word, on Mr. Mill's strange attempt to enlist Reid's authority on his side. He speaks of "*Reid's* conclusion that, to beings possessing only the sense of sight, the paradoxes here quoted and several others would be truths of intuition, self-evident truths." But it is quite impossible that Reid can have intended what is here implied, because notoriously he maintained that men cognize with certitude the self-evident truth of mathematical axioms. In p. 451 of the volume from which Mr. Mill quotes, he says (*sub finem*) that "mathematical axioms" possess "intuitive evidence," and in p. 452 he proceeds to enumerate them among the "first principles of necessary truths." We are confident that Dr. Reid, in the passage on which Mr. Mill relies, intended the very truth which it will be our own business to set forth in opposition to our present antagonist.

In order to the apprehension of Mr. Mill's argument, it is necessary to premise, that both he and Dr. Reid account differences of *distance* as made known to man, not really by sight at all, but exclusively by touch. They hold therefore, that, if any man possessing sight were without the sense of touch, he would account all the objects seen by him to be *equidistant*. We are perfectly willing to admit this doctrine

for argument's sake, though we have no conviction of its truth.

This being laid down, Mr. Mill in effect thus argues : Let a planet be supposed, the inhabitants of which possess the sense of sight but not that of touch ; while their mental constitution is identical with that of the human race. The objects, which the planetarian sees at any given moment, are all accounted by him as equally distant from himself, and accordingly as ranged on the inner surface of a hollow sphere, his eye being centre of that sphere. Let a straight line be placed before his vision : it will appear to him as the arc of a great circle of that sphere. He is told, however, on trustworthy authority that it is a straight line ; and he will therefore enounce, as a self-evidently necessary truth, that every straight line being produced will at last return into itself, and that any two straight lines being produced will meet in two points. Those geometrical axioms therefore—such is Mr. Mill's implied conclusion—which contradict these two propositions, are not known to man by his mental constitution (for the planetarian has the very *same* mental constitution) but by his possessing and exercising the sense of touch.

When once this argument is stated, there can hardly be any need of exposing its fallacy. The truth, which this planetarian regards as self-evidently necessary, *is* self-evidently necessary in the judgment of all objectivists : only he has learned to clothe it in non-human language. That form, which he has learned to designate by the name "straight line," is precisely that which *human beings* designate an "arc of a great circle of a sphere."

Whether such a planetarian *could* conceive the idea which men call a "straight line," is a question which we shall not here discuss ; but if he do conceive that idea—possessing as he does the same mental constitution with men—he will cognize as self-evidently necessary, that no

straight line, however produced, can possibly return into itself, and that no two straight lines can intersect in more than one point. In what language he will have learnt to *express* this idea "straight line," we cannot of course guess.

We are not aware of any other reasoning of the least importance anywhere employed by Mr. Mill, in opposition to the objectivist doctrine on mathematical axioms. It seems to us, that in every instance the only effect he has legitimately produced, is to open out some fresh line of argument, which tells with irresistible force against his own conclusion.

We ought not, however, perhaps—considering the ultimate purpose of these essays—entirely to pass over a philosophical theory, which arrives at a goal substantially the same with Mr. Mill's, by a route precisely opposite. Our readers will remember that, towards the beginning of our essay, we drew a distinction between "tautological" and "significant" propositions. A proposition of the former class declares no more than has already been expressed in its subject. Suppose, *e.g.*, some one were gravely to enounce, that "every square is quadrilateral:" "*of course*," I should reply; "for 'quadrilateral' is part of what is expressed by the very word 'square.'" Such nugatory propositions are of the form "A is A." and Mr. Mill would himself admit that they are known independently of experience; though reasonably enough he might refuse to dignify them with the name of "*a priori*" or "necessary." Now such a philosopher as we speak of, while admitting that mathematical axioms are cognized independently of experience, maintains that they are "tautological;" and consequently that no inference can reasonably be made from *them* to the case of "significant" propositions. He denies accordingly, that there are any "necessary" propositions of the latter class.

As this view is fundamentally opposed to Mr. Mill's, it is no part of our present business to reason against it at any length. We will but draw attention to the whimsical character of a theory which alleges that a vast body of new truths can be syllogistically deduced from tautologies; and we will add one single argument by way of refutation. So far is it from being true that "triangular" is part of what is expressed by the word "trilateral,"—that on the contrary I have comprehended the *whole* of what is meant by "trilateral," before I have so much as asked myself the question whether a trilateral figure has three angles or any angle at all. So far is it from being true that  $3+8$  is part of what is expressed by the words  $2+9$ ,—that on the contrary I have comprehended the whole of what is meant by the latter before I have so much as *thought* of the former, consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly.

Mr. Mill has some excellent observations on this theory, so far as regards arithmetical axioms, in his "Logic," vol. i. pp. 284–289.

We now, however, return to our general argument. From what has been hitherto said three inferences may be deduced, of much importance in their respective ways.

I. Mathematical axioms are not ordinarily intue<sup>d</sup> at first in an universal but in an individual shape. Dr. M'Cosh has done very great service, by dwelling on this truth in the case of *all* intuitions; but our present concern is with mathematical axioms. I hold 7 pebbles in one hand and 4 in the other, and then transfer one from the larger to the smaller group. I intue, as a self-evidently necessary truth, that the new  $5 + 6 =$  the old  $4 + 7$ : that not even Omnipotence could make the case otherwise. On reflection I perceive that the same truth holds, not of *these* pebbles only, but of *all* pebbles; not of *pebbles* only but of all numerable things. Still further, reflection enables me to intue the more general axiom,  $a + b = (a + 1) + (b - 1)$ ;

and the more general axiom still,  $a + b = (a + m) + (b - m)$ ; where  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $m$  may be any whole numbers whatever, so only, that  $m$  be not greater than  $b$ . *Capability* of being universalized is indubitably a characteristic of self-evidently necessary truths; but we shall be quite mistaken, if we fancy that they are ordinarily *intued* as universal. The immense majority of mankind, while again and again accepting them in their individual shape, seldom if ever universalize an axiom from the beginning of their life to the end.

II. There can be no need of employing words to prove the very obvious proposition, that if mathematical axioms are self-evidently necessary, the validity of syllogistic reasoning is no less so. But the whole body of mathematical truth is derived syllogistically from mathematical axioms, and it follows therefore, that the whole body of mathematical truth is strictly necessary.

III. Even were there no other necessary truths than those which (we trust) we have conclusively proved to be such in our present essay,—let us observe what results from our argument. Entirely distinct from, entirely over and above, the experimental order, there is a body of what may be called “transcendental” truth; truth which transcends human experience.\* We are not able yet to decide whether all transcendental truth is necessary: but anyhow all necessary truth is transcendental; for the knowledge of

\* It will conduce to clearness, if we accurately distinguish between our use of the words “transcendental” and “intuitional.” We call those truths “intuitional,” which the individual accepts exclusively on the ground of mental intuition, and we call those truths “transcendental” which are neither experienced facts nor inferable from experienced facts. Thus the truths testified by *memory* are “intuitional,” but not “transcendental.” They are facts which have been experienced, and therefore are not “transcendental” truths, yet they are known to him who remembers them, exclusively on the ground of present intuition, and they are therefore “intuitional.” On the other hand, Euclid’s theorems are “transcendental,” but not generally “intuitional,” because they are not accepted on the ground of intuition, but of *deduction* from intuitive truths.



anything as *necessary*—Mr. Mill will be the first to admit—is wholly unattainable from mere *experience*. Further, among these transcendental truths are to be numbered the propositions of geometry, arithmetic, algebra, the differential calculus, calculus of variations, etc. Again, all the truths of mechanics and physical astronomy are necessary, if understood hypothetically. Take any proposition whatever of physical astronomy: it is a necessary truth that this proposition holds, *if* there be in existence a certain attractive force. But still further. Scientific men have not of course taken the trouble to work out a series of necessary hypothetical propositions, except in those comparatively few cases where the hypothesis corresponds with physical fact. But a million other hypotheses may be framed; as *e.g.* that the force of gravitation varies inversely as the distance, or as the cube of the distance, etc.: and for each one of these hypotheses, a new vast series of necessary hypothetical propositions can be evolved. It is plain then that, though there were no necessary truths except mathematical, even so their number is literally unimaginable and incalculable; immeasurably more than a thousand times the number of experimental truths. All trustworthy science, says Mr. Mill, is experimental: on the contrary, the enormous majority of true scientific propositions are transcendental.

This will be our best place, for explaining the exact end at which we are aiming in this series of essays. Our ultimate purpose is a philosophical establishment of Theism: *i.e.* of the dogma, that there exists a Personal God, Infinite in all perfections, the Creator and Moral Governor of the universe. Those who deny that this dogma is cognizable by man with certitude, may be called “anti-theists;” *i.e.* opponents of Theism. Of these, comparatively few are dogmatic atheists; men who think that reason

disproves the existence of a Personal Creator. A far larger number, of whom Professor Huxley may be taken as representative, are "nescients;" i.e. deny that man can know certainly, or even probably, anything whatever about the matter. Others again, far more numerous perhaps than is commonly supposed, regard it as probable that the universe had an intelligent Maker; but are driven, by the existence of moral and physical evil, to deny that this Maker combines Infinite Power with Infinite Love. We are led by various indications to suspect that Mr. Mill himself belongs to this category. Lastly, there are "pantheists." The pantheist holds with some emphasis the cognizableness of the "Absolute" and the "Unconditioned;" but denies the existence of a Personal God, to Whom men are responsible, Who knows their thoughts, and Who will requite them according to their works. Now we believe that pantheists—certainly Hegelian pantheists—hold in philosophy the objectivist doctrine: but they have no important representative in England; \* and at all events would require a totally distinct consideration. While therefore our arguments, we hope, shall be such as to hold their own against all comers, our *direct* contest shall be only with those antitheists who profess the phenomenal philosophy.

The phenomenistic doctrine is such as this: that an ascertained truth, means a truth experienced or inferred from experience; that he who lays stress on supposed *intuitions* leaves a foundation of rock to build on the sand; that such a thinker, instead of manfully and philosophically confronting facts, erects into a would-be oracle his own individual idiosyncrasy; that "*a priori* philosophy" means simply the enthronement of prejudice and the rejection of experience. And we fully admit, or rather indeed contend,

\* Dr. Stirling, the leading English Hegelian, professes belief even in Christianity. ("Secret of Hegel," preface, p. xxi.)

that this phenomenistic doctrine issues legitimately in pronounced antitheism.

Our first reply to it shall be founded on the faculty of memory. "Our belief in the veracity of memory," says Mr. Mill (on Hamilton, p. 508, note), "is evidently ultimate: no reason can be given for it, which does not presuppose the belief and assume it to be well founded." In other words, according to his frank confession, when I trust my memory—when I believe myself to have experienced what my memory distinctly testifies—I am resting exclusively on an intuition; I am holding most firmly a truth for which experience gives me no warrant at all.\* Yet *unless* I hold firmly this intuitive truth, I am literally incapable of receiving any experience whatever; I have no knowledge of any kind except my present consciousness. The whole fabric of experience then has, for its exclusive foundation, a series of those intuitions which are called acts of memory. If intuitions as such are to be distrusted, experience is an impossibility and its very notion an absurdity.

Mr. Mill has laid himself open, we think, to just criticism, for his *mode* of making this most honourable admission. No one will doubt, either that the phenomenist school professes the general doctrine we have ascribed to it, or that Mr. Mill habitually identifies himself with that school. Yet here is a most pointed *exception* to the school's general doctrine; and an exception which no phenomenist had made before. Surely he might reasonably have been expected not merely to state it (however explicitly and unmistakably) in a *note*, but to give it a prominent position in his work. If ever there were a paradoxical position, his is one on the surface. It is most intelligible to say that

\* This is undeniably Mr. Mill's admission for he says that no reason whatever—whether grounded on experience or on any other basis—can be given for the veracity of memory, "which does not presuppose the very thesis for which it is adduced." A reason which presupposes the very thesis for which it is adduced is undeniably no reason at all

there are no trustworthy intuitions; and it is most intelligible to say that there are many such: but on the surface it is the *ne plus ultra* of paradox, to say that there is *just one* such and no more. He seems to have been unconsciously almost ashamed of this paradox; and instead of placing it in the foreground, has shrouded it in the obscurity of a note.

Then further he was surely called on to state explicitly his *reasons*. He holds that there is just one intuition—one and only one—which carries with it its own evidence of truth. There was an imperative claim on him then, as he valued his philosophical character, to explain clearly and pointedly *where the distinction lies* between acts of memory and other alleged intuitions. He would have found the task very difficult, we confidently affirm; but that only gives us more reason for complaining that he did not make the attempt. To us it seems, that various classes of intuition are *more* favourably circumstanced for the establishment of their trustworthiness, than is that class which Mr. Mill accepts. Thus in the case of many a wicked action, it would really be *easier* for the criminal to believe that he had never committed it, than to doubt its necessary turpitude and detestableness. Then in the case of other intuitions, I know that the rest of mankind share them with myself; and I often know also that experience confirms them so far as it goes: but I must confidently trust my acts of clear and distinct *memory*, before I can even guess what is *held* by other men or what is *declared* by experience. We think it a blot on Mr. Mill's philosophy, that he has chosen, as his only trustworthy class of intuitions, a class for which there is less extrinsic evidence than for that of many others. But we think it a far greater blot on his philosophy, that instead of facing the difficulty he has ignored it.

This, then, is our first argument against the phenomenist

doctrine. So far from experience being a more trustworthy guide than intuition, experience is not so much as possible unless we are throughout guided by intuition. Our second argument against the same doctrine is more closely connected with the earlier part of this essay. Phenomenists allege, that experience affords a legitimate basis for certitude, and that intuition affords no such basis. On the contrary—without here discussing the question of “greater” or “less” certitude—at all events intuition affords a *higher kind* of certitude than does experience. Experience at best can but declare what happens within the reach of human observation: but intuition avouches truths eternal and immutable, truths which necessarily hold good in every possible region of existence.

But thirdly, we maintain against phenomenists, that the best grounded conclusions of experimental science are not certain *at all*, except in virtue of certain necessary truths known mediately or immediately by intuition. In other words we maintain, that the certainty of physical science rests in last analysis, not on the phenomenal but on the transcendental order. This is a conclusion of extreme importance; and we shall devote to it the remainder of our essay. Our argument is this.

All physical science depends for its existence on the fundamental truth, that the laws of nature are uniform.\* By introducing transcendental considerations, Catholics are able to prove conclusively this fundamental truth. We cannot indeed enumerate and weigh these transcendental considerations, until we have reached a later stage of our argument; here we are only contending, that no basis

\* In saying that “the laws of nature are uniform,” we mean, of course, that no physical phenomenon takes place without a corresponding physical antecedent, and that the same physical antecedent is invariably followed by the same physical consequent. Of course we hold firmly against Mr Mill that such physical antecedents are *efficient causes*; but this consideration is external to our present argument.

adduced by consistent *phenomenists* can suffice for its support. This is virtually admitted by the phenomenist philosopher, who has closer philosophical connection with Mr. Mill than has any other living writer: we refer to Mr. Bain. His language is so remarkable, that we shall quote it entire, italicizing one or two sentences.

Granting, however, that the belief in memory, as well as the belief in present consciousness, is a primary assumption, we next remark that it comes short of our needs. The most authentic recollection gives only what *has been*, something that has ceased, and can concern us no longer. A far more perilous leap remains, *the leap to the future*. All our interest is concentrated on what has yet to be, the present and the past are of value only as a clue to the events that are to come. Now, it is far easier to satisfy us of what has been, than of what is still to be.

The postulate that we are in quest of must carry us across the gulf, from the experienced known, either present or remembered, to the unexperienced and unknown—must perform the leap of real inference. "Water has quenched our thirst in the past," by what assumption do we affirm that the same will happen in the future? *Experience does not teach us this*; experience is only what has actually been, and, after never so many repetitions of a thing, there still remains the peril of venturing upon the untrodden land of future possibility.

The fact, generally expressed as nature's uniformity, is the guarantee, the ultimate major premise, of all induction. "What has been, will be," justifies the inference that water will assuage thirst in after times. *We can give no reason, or evidence, for this uniformity*; and, therefore, the course seems to be to adopt this as the finishing postulate. And, undoubtedly, there is no other issue possible. We have a choice of modes of expressing the assumption, but, whatever be the expression, the substance is what is conveyed by the fact of uniformity.

Let us word the postulate thus.—"What has uniformly been in the past will be in the future." Otherwise "what has never been contradicted in any known instance (there being ample means and opportunities of search) will always be true."

This assumption is an ample justification of the inductive operation, as a process of real inference. Without it, we can do nothing, with it, we can do anything. *Our only error is in*

*proposing to give any reason or justification of it, to treat it otherwise than as begged at the very outset* If there be a reason, it is not theoretical, but practical. Without the assumption, we could not take the smallest steps in practical matters; we could not pursue any object or end in life. Unless the future is to reproduce the past, it is an enigma, a labyrinth. ("Deductive Logic," pp. 273, 274.)

We give Mr. Bain every credit for his moral candour in making the admission—so repugnant to phenomenist principles—that, without this *a priori* presumption, science would be impossible; and yet that no "reason or justification" for the assumption can possibly be given. Still we must account the passage we have quoted discreditable to his intellectual character. In his work on "The Senses and the Intellect," Mr. Bain emphatically denies, that even mathematical axioms are intuitively known, and yet he maintains the intuitive cognizableness of such a proposition, as that "what has uniformly been in the past will be in the future." For this truly amazing assumption he gives no reason whatever,—and says that no reason *can* be given,—except that physical science could not go on without it. Yet what would he himself say to an objectivist, who should assume the intuitive cognizableness of morality, while giving no other reason for that assumption, except that Christianity could not get on without it? He would say, we suppose, "so much the worse for Christianity," and we might similarly reply to him, if we chose to be so narrow-minded, "so much the worse for physical science." We really know not one of the "*a priori* fallacies" which Mr. Mill in his "Logic" so ably denounces, more extravagantly wild than Mr. Bain's. "Nature abhors a vacuum;" "*actio non datur in distans*," \* "the heavenly bodies must move

\* Some philosophers, even some Catholic philosophers, really consider this axiomatic. F. Franzelin, however ("De Deo Uno," p. 356), says that Scotus, Vasquez, Biel, Francis Lugo, Valentia, and many grave theologians either doubt or deny its truth. And this fact, by the way, disproves Mr. Mill's

in the most perfect of figures, i.e. a circle,"—there is not one of these propositions, which may not quite as plausibly be considered self-evident. Moreover, the thinkers who have advocated such axioms as those above mentioned, have at all events openly avowed themselves *a priori* philosophers; whereas Mr. Bain, the originator of this astonishing *tour de force*, professes himself a severe and cautious disciple of experience.

There are two doctrines importantly different, on the uniformity of nature. There is the Catholic doctrine, that the laws of nature are ordinarily uniform, but very often miraculously suspended; and there is the infidel doctrine, that they are *unexceptionally* uniform. Mr. Bain's language throughout implies the latter. In other words, he assumes as intuitive a principle, which with one breath sweeps off the whole Christian religion, without condescending to give even one philosophical reason for his opinion.\*

Mr. Mill is by no means so unfaithful to his phenomenism as Mr. Bain, in the proof which he gives for the uniformity of nature. He thus reasons:—

The considerations which, as I apprehend, give, at the present day, to the proof of the law of uniformity of succession as true of all phenomena without exception, this character of completeness and conclusiveness, are the following —First, that we know it directly to be true of far the greatest number of

statement ("Logic," vol. ii p. 317), that so recently as "rather more than a century ago" this "was a scientific maxim disputed by no one and which no one deemed to require any proof" For ourselves we can see no shadow of ground for the maxim.

\* We ought not to conceal the fact, that the sentence immediately following our extract runs thus "our natural prompting is to *assume* such identity [of the future with the past], to believe it first and prove it afterwards," and the last words may be understood as meaning that we can "prove it afterwards" Certainly the sentence is expressed with discreditable obscurity, but Mr. Bain had already said expressly that "experience does not prove this," and this sentence therefore must only mean, that when *the future becomes the present* we shall be able to prove that it resembles the past.



phenomena; that there are none of which we know it not to be true, the utmost that can be said being that of some we cannot positively from direct evidence affirm its truth, while phenomenon after phenomenon, as they become better known to us, are constantly passing from the latter class into the former; and in all cases in which that transition has not yet taken place, the absence of direct proof is accounted for by the rarity or the obscurity of the phenomena, our deficient means of observing them, or the logical difficulties arising from the complication of the circumstances in which they occur, insomuch that, notwithstanding as rigid a dependence on given conditions as exists in the case of any other phenomenon, it was not likely that we should be better acquainted with those conditions than we are. Besides this first class of considerations, there is a second, which still further corroborates the conclusion. Although there are phenomena the production and changes of which elude all our attempts to reduce them universally to any ascertained law, yet in every such case, the phenomenon, or the objects concerned in it, are found in some instances to obey the known laws of nature. The wind, for example, is the type of uncertainty and caprice, yet we find it in some cases obeying with as much constancy as any phenomenon in nature the law of the tendency of fluids to distribute themselves so as to equalize the pressure on every side of each of their particles; as in the case of the trade winds, and the monsoons. Lightning might once have been supposed to obey no laws, but since it has been ascertained to be identical with electricity, we know that the very same phenomenon in some of its manifestations is implicitly obedient to the action of fixed causes. I do not believe that there is now one object or event in all our experience of nature, within the bounds of the solar system at least, which has not either been ascertained by direct observation to follow laws of its own, or been proved to be closely similar to objects and events which, in more familiar manifestations, or on a more limited scale, follow strict laws. our inability to trace the same laws on a larger scale and in the more recondite instances, being accounted for by the number and complication of the modifying causes, or by their inaccessibility to observation. ("Logic," vol. ii. pp. 106, 107.)

Before we consider the value of this argument, a preliminary remark will be in place. We have already said

that, by help of transcendental considerations, the uniformity of nature is conclusively established; and we will here add, that these transcendental considerations are of such a kind as to impress their force, not on philosophers only, but on all mankind. Since then, as we consider, the mass of men are at starting most reasonably and completely convinced of the thesis which Mr. Mill desires to prove, it is only to be expected that they should receive with ready acquiescence any reasoning which is adduced for so undeniably true a conclusion. Let it be granted, then, that the majority of Mr. Mill's readers are satisfied with his argument. Still such a fact does not at all evince the argument's real sufficiency, because the fact may so easily be accounted for by the cause which we have stated.

Now Mr. Mill's reasoning amounts at best to this. If in any part of the world there existed a breach in the uniformity of nature, that breach must by this time have been discovered by one or other of the eminent men who have given themselves to physical experiment. But most certainly, adds Mr. Mill, none such has ever been discovered, or mankind would be sure to have heard of it: consequently, such is his conclusion, none such exists. Now, in order to estimate the force of this argument, let us suppose for a moment that the fact were as Mr. Mill represents it; let us suppose for a moment that persons of scientific education were unanimous in holding, that there has been no well-authenticated case of a breach in the uniformity of nature. What *inference* could be drawn from this? Be it observed that the number of natural agents constantly at work is incalculably large; and that the observed cases of uniformity in their action must be immeasurably fewer than one thousandth of the whole. Scientific men, we assume for the moment, have discovered that in a certain proportion of instances—immeasurably fewer than one thousandth of the whole—a certain fact has prevailed; the fact of uni-

formity : and they have not found a single instance in which that fact does *not* prevail. Are they justified, we ask, in inferring from these premisses that the fact is *universal* ? Surely the question answers itself. Let us make a very grotesque supposition, in which however the conclusion would really be tried according to the arguments adduced. In some desert of Africa there is an enormous connected edifice surrounding some vast space, in which dwell certain reasonable beings who are unable to leave the enclosure. In this edifice are more than a thousand chambers, which some years ago were entirely locked up, and the keys no one knew where. By constant diligence twenty-five keys have been found, out of the whole number ; and the corresponding chambers, situated promiscuously throughout the edifice, have been opened. Each chamber, when examined, is found to be in the precise shape of a dodecahedron. Are the inhabitants justified on that account in holding with certitude, that the remaining 975 chambers are built on the same plan ? We cannot fancy that Mr. Mill would answer in the affirmative : yet otherwise how will his reasoning stand ?

But, secondly, it is as far as possible from being true that men of scientific education are unanimous in holding that there has been no well-authenticated case of breach in the uniformity of nature. On the contrary, even to this day the majority of such persons believe in Christianity, and hold the miracles revealed in Scripture to be on the whole accurately reported. The majority of scientific men believe that, at one time, persons on whom the shadow of Peter passed were thereby freed from their infirmities ; and that, at another time, garments brought from the body of Paul expelled sickness and demoniacal possession (Acts v. 15 ; xix. 12). Will Mr. Mill allege that S. Peter's shadow, or that garments from S. Paul's body, were the *physical cause* of a cure, as lotions and bandages might be ? Of course

not. Here then is a series of physical phenomena, resulting without physical cause; and Catholics to this day consider that breaches in the uniformity of nature are matters of every-day occurrence.\* Even then if it were true—at seems to us (as we have already said) most untrue—that Mr. Mill's conclusion legitimately follows from his premisses,—still he cannot even approximate to *establishing* those premisses, until he have first disproved Catholicity and next disproved the whole truth of Christianity.

But the strongest objection against the sufficiency of Mr. Mill's argument still remains to be stated. "All our interest," says Mr. Bain most truly, "is concentrated on *what is yet to be*; the present and the past *are of value only* as a clue to the events *that are to come*." Let us even suppose then for argument's sake, that Mr. Mill had fully proved the past and present uniformity of nature. still the main difficulty would continue; viz. how he proposes to show that such uniformity will last one moment beyond the present. It is quite an elementary remark that, whenever a proposition is grounded on mere experience, nothing

\* In the following passage F Newman does but express what is held by all thoughtful Catholics who are at all well acquainted with the facts of their religion. We italicize one or two sentences —

"Putting out of the question the hypothesis of unknown laws of nature (which is an evasion from the force of any proof) I think it impossible to withstand the evidence which is brought for the liquefaction of the blood of S Januarius at Naples, and for the motion of the eyes of the pictures of the Madonna in the Roman States. I see no reason to doubt the material of the Lombard Crown at Monza, and I do not see why the Holy Coat at Trèves may not have been what it professes to be. I firmly believe that portions of the True Cross are at Rome and elsewhere, that the Crib of Bethlehem is at Rome, and the bodies of S Peter and S Paul also. I believe that at Rome too lies S Stephen, that S Matthew lies at Salerno, and S Andrew at Amalfi. I firmly believe that *the relics of the saints are doing innumerable miracles and graces daily*, and that it needs only for a Catholic to show devotion to any saint in order to receive special benefits from his intercession. I firmly believe that saints in their lifetime have before now *raised the dead to life, crossed the sea without vessels, multiplied grain and bread, cured incurable diseases*, and stopped the operation of the laws of the universe in a multitude of ways." ("Lectures on Catholicism in England," p 298)

whatever can be known or even guessed concerning its truth, except within the reach of possible observation. For this very reason, Mr. Mill professes himself unable to know, or even to assign any kind of probability to the supposition, that nature proceeds on uniform laws in distant stellar regions. But plainly there are conditions of *time*, as well as of *space*, which preclude the possibility of observation; and it is as simply impossible for men to know from mere experience what will take place on earth to-morrow, as to know from mere experience what takes place in the planet Jupiter to-day.

In considering the question "on what grounds we expect that the sun will rise to-morrow," Mr. Mill ("Logic," vol. ii. p. 80) falls into a mistake very unusual with him; for he totally misapprehends the difficulty which he has to encounter. He argues—we think quite successfully—that there is a probability amounting to practical certainty that the sun will rise to-morrow, *on the hypothesis that the uniformity of nature so long continues*. But the question he has to face is, what reason can he have for knowing, or even guessing, that the uniformity of nature *will* so long continue? And to this, the true question at issue, he does not so much as attempt a reply.

Notwithstanding the disclaimer, with which we started, our recent course of argument may have led unwary readers to fancy, that we have been in some way disparaging the trustworthiness and certainty of physical science. So far is this from being so, that on the contrary such trustworthiness and certainty constitute the major premiss of our syllogism. That syllogism runs as follows. The declarations of physical science are absolutely trustworthy and certain: but if there were no human knowledge independent of human experience, they would *not* be trustworthy and certain; consequently it is untrue that there is no human knowledge independent of human experience. In

other words, that doctrine of phenomenism, which in some sense idolizes physical science, is in real truth fatal to the object of its idolatry.

Here we conclude for the present. This essay has consisted of two distinct portions : in the former of these we have purported to prove against Mr. Mill, on grounds of reason, the existence of certain necessary truths ; while in the latter portion we have set forth some general considerations, which tell importantly, as we think, against the doctrine of phenomenism. These considerations may sufficiently be summed up as follows. Phenomenism, taken in its full extent, teaches primarily, that experience is the only legitimate foundation for certitude ; and teaches secondarily, as an inference from this, that there is no necessary truth humanly cognizable as such. We have replied firstly, as to intutional truths in general, that (by Mr. Mill's own admission) no experience is so much as possible, unless a large number of truths be assumed, which are *not* known by experience ; viz. truths testified by *memory*. And we have replied secondly, as to necessary truths in particular, that unless necessary truths were cognizable, experimental science could not so much as exist.

Our ultimate purpose however in these essays, as we have said, is to draw out, as completely as we can, the philosophical argument for Theism. But it does not follow, because Mr. Mill's phenomenism is false, that therefore Theism is true ; on the contrary, for the full establishment of that fundamental dogma, it will be necessary to accumulate a large number of philosophical premisses. This we hope to perform in future essays.

### III.

#### MR. MILL ON THE FOUNDATION OF MORALITY.\*

IN our last essay we argued against Mr. Mill, that mathematical truths possess the attribute of "necessity;" and in this we are to argue against him, that *moral* truths also are of the same kind. We have done important service, we consider, in our previous paper, not only towards the particular conclusion there advocated, but towards the conclusion also which we are now to maintain. The doctrine that there are truths possessing that very singular quality expressed by the term "necessary"—this doctrine is *a priori* both so startling, and also pregnant with consequences so momentous, that the philosopher may well require absolutely irresistible evidence before he will accept it. This was our reason for placing mathematical truths in the very front of our controversial position; because they afford so much less room than others for confusion and equivocalness, that their "necessary" character is on that account more irresistibly evident. When the philosopher is once obliged to admit that there *are* propositions of this character, it is a matter of comparative detail *which* they are. This, therefore, is the

\* *An Essay in aid of a Grammar of Assent* By JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, D D, of the Oratory London Burns, Oates, & Co

*Dissertations and Discussions* By JOHN STUART MILL London J W Parker

*Utilitarianism* By JOHN STUART MILL London Longmans

*The Emotions and the Will Chap XV. The Moral Sense.* By ALEXANDER BAIN, A.M London J W Parker

position of advantage from which we approach our present theme.

But from another point of view, we are *less* favourably circumstanced in our present than in our former undertaking. There is no difference of opinion worth mentioning as to what those propositions *are* which are called mathematical axioms: and there are only therefore two possible alternatives; viz. whether those axioms are, or are not, self-evidently necessary. All phenomenists are on one side, and all objectivists, as a matter of course, on the other. But those who hold most strongly the "necessary" character of moral science differ nevertheless importantly from each other, as to what are those axioms on which the science is founded. Whatever theory we adopt, we must necessarily have for our opponents, not only all phenomenists, but a large number of objectivists also. Even among Catholics there are some subordinate differences on the subject; and before we enter on our reply to Mr. Mill, there are three little matters of domestic controversy which we must briefly consider, in order to make clear the precise position which is to be our controversial standpoint.

The first of these relates to a phrase which we have more than once used. We are here assuming for the moment, what we are afterwards to defend against Mr. Mill, that there are certain moral axioms intuitively known\* and we have frequently used the phrase "moral faculty" to express that mental faculty whereby such axioms are cognized. F. Liberatore (*Ethica*, n. 32) understands this phrase to imply, that moral truths are not discerned by the intellect and reason, but assumed by blind propension and instinct. With great deference to so distinguished a writer, we must nevertheless say that this seems to us a complete misapprehension of Reid's and

\* By the term "axioms" are here meant "self-evidently necessary truths."



Hutcheson's meaning; and it is certainly removed to the greatest possible degree from our own. By the phrase "moral faculty" we mean neither more nor less (as we have said) than the power, which resides in man's intellect, of cognizing moral axioms with self-evident certitude. For various reasons, it seems to us of extreme importance that attention should be carefully fixed on this power; and we think it very desirable, therefore, to give it a special name.\*

F. Newman habitually uses the word "conscience" to express substantially the same thing; nor could any word be better adapted to the purpose, so far as regards the ordinary usage of Englishmen. Our own difficulty in so using it arises from the circumstance, that the word "conscientia" has a theological sense, importantly different from F. Newman's, and yet not so far removed from it as to prevent real danger of one being confused with the other. The theological word "conscientia" does not commonly express an intellectual power or *habit*, but an existing *declaration* of the intellect, as to the morality (*hic et nunc*) of this or that particular act: and so one hears of a "correct" or an "erroneous," of a "certain" or a "doubtful" conscience. Then again, and more importantly, its office is the cognition, not so much of moral *axioms* as of moral *conclusions* and the first premisses too on which it proceeds, are not merely moral axioms, but include God's positive precepts, the Church's interpretation of the Divine Law, and the Church's positive commands. We cannot, then, but think it will be more conducive to clearness if we avoid using this word in F. Newman's sense.

We now proceed to our second preliminary. It is a very prominent doctrine of F. Newman's, that "con-

\* It may be worth while also to cite Liberatore's own statement—*"hominem individuum universamque societatem ad perfectionem moralem juxta amplificationem et naturæ incitari, atque ideo typo quodam honestatis in animis inculpto gaudere, quo dyjudicet quibus defectibus liberari et quibus bonis augeri debeat"* (Introductio ad Ethicam, art. III.)

science" testifies emphatically God's existence. And very many Catholic writers hold (as will be presently seen) that whenever reason notifies to me the intrinsic turpitude of this or that act, it thereupon notifies to me the existence of some Supreme Legislator, who forbids it. This doctrine, however, may be advocated in two essentially different senses.

On the one hand, it may merely be alleged that whenever reason notifies to me the intrinsic moral turpitude of this or that act, it further notifies, by most prompt and immediate consequence, the prohibition of that act by some Supreme Legislator. We incline to think that such is F. Newman's meaning. At all events, we ourselves heartily accept this doctrine, and are to maintain it in the course of our present article.

But, on the other hand, it may be alleged that the idea itself—"moral turpitude"—is either identical with, or includes, that of "prohibition by a Supreme Legislator." We cannot assent to such a proposition. We accept S. Ignatius's teaching in the "Spiritual Exercises," that evil acts possess a "*fecitas et nequitia*" of their own, "*ex naturâ suâ, vel si prohibita non essent.*" We follow Suarez in holding, that they would be "*mala, peccata, culpabilia,*" even if (per impossibile) there existed no law strictly so called forbidding them. We follow Vasquez, Bellarmine, Lessius, and other eminent theologians, in their use of similar expressions.\* We are not here arguing

\* A considerable number of passages to this effect have been cited by Dr Ward, in his "Philosophical Introduction," from the most eminent Catholic theologians and philosophers, including the expressions mentioned in the text (pp 429-490). Since that work was published, the phrase used in it—"independent morality"—has been adopted by some French infidels to express certain tenets, which we consider to be as philosophically despicable as they are morally detestable. But the phrase had not been dirtied, to his knowledge at least, when Dr Ward used it. F Chastel, SJ (Dr. Ward, p. 481) raises the question, whether "there is a moral law *independently* of all Divine law," and proceeds to answer it in the affirmative. Suarez (ib p 483) says, "*dictamina rationis naturalis, in quibus hæc lex*

against those excellent Catholics who think otherwise:\* we are but explaining the position we shall assume, in this part of our controversy against Mr. Mill.

Thirdly, the question has been raised among Catholics, whether there can be *obligation*, properly so called, apart from man's knowledge of a Supreme Legislator. So far as this question is distinct from the preceding, it seems to us purely verbal. If, by saying that act A is of obligation, you only mean that its omission would be culpable and sinful,—we hold (consistently with our previous remarks) that there may be true obligation, without reference to a Legislator's prohibition. So F. Chastel says, "there would still remain *moral obligation*, real duty, though one made abstraction of God and religion." On the other hand, if the term be understood as implying the correlative act of a Legislator who obliges, of course there can be no obligation without full means of knowing such a Legislator.

Without further delay, let us set forth the precise issue which we are to join with Mr. Mill. There is a large number of cognizable truths, which may be expressed in one or other of the following shapes. "Act A is morally good;" "act B is morally bad;" "act C is morally better than act D." All these, it will be seen, are but different shapes, in which emerges the one fundamental idea called "moral goodness." We will call such judgments, therefore, "moral judgments;" and the truths cognized in them "moral truths."† Our allegation against Mr. Mill is, that a certain number‡ of these truths are cognized as self-[naturalis] consistit, sunt intrinsecè necessaria et independentia ab omni voluntate etiam Divinâ."

\* Dr Ward has done so in his "Philosophical Introduction," pp 78-80

† We need hardly say that a "moral judgment" may be mistaken; and that in that case there is no corresponding "moral truth"

‡ "Parentes cole," "Deo convenientem cultum exhibe," "rationem sensibus ne subicias," et alia innumera generis ejusdem." (Liberatore, n. 80)

evidently necessary. These we call "moral axioms." Mr. Mill admits, of course, that moral judgments are very frequently elicited; but, denying as he does the existence of *any* necessary truths, he denies inclusively that there are *moral truths* self-evidently necessary. The ground which he often seems to take is that no moral judgments are *intuitions*, but that all are *inferences*; though these inferences, he would add, are so readily and imperceptibly drawn, as to be most naturally and almost inevitably mistaken for intuitions.

That we may bring this vital question to a distinct issue, it is highly important to dwell at starting on the fundamental idea "moral goodness." There is probably no psychical fact, so pregnant with momentous consequences in the existing state of philosophy, as man's possession of this idea. Very many philosophers hold, that it is complex and resolvable accordingly into simpler elements; we contend earnestly and confidently that it is simple.

The strong bias of our opinion is, that Mr. Mill (as we shall explain in a later part of our essay) so far agrees with ourselves; though his *expression* of doctrine would no doubt be importantly different. It is very possible, however, that the case may be otherwise; and that he may regard the idea before us as consisting of simpler elements. In that case he must consistently say, that "morally good," as applied to human acts, means neither more nor less than "conducive to general enjoyment." Provisionally, therefore, we shall assume this as Mr. Mill's position.

Now, this is an issue, one would think, which must admit of speedy and definite decision: for there is perhaps no one idea which so constantly meets one at every turn, whether in literature or conversation, as that of "morally good" with its correlatives. "I am bound to do what I am paid for doing;" "how conscientious a man H is!"

"K behaved in that matter with much more uprightness than L;" "M is an undeniable scoundrel;" "no praise can be too great for N's disinterested benevolence and self-sacrifice," "whatever God commands, men of course are bound to do." At this moment we are in no way concerned with the truth or falsehood of such propositions, but exclusively with their *meaning*. Our readers will see at once, that these judgments, and a thousand others of daily occurrence, contain unmistakably the idea "morally good," under different aspects; and if they consider the matter with any care they will further see, that this idea is as distinct from the idea "conducive to general enjoyment," as any one can possibly be from any other. This is the proposition which we now wish to illustrate and establish.

Take the last instance we gave: "whatever God commands, a man is bound to do;" or, in other words, "whatever God commands, a man acts morally ill in failing to do." Does the Theist mean, by this judgment, that the individual's disobedience to God  *militates against general enjoyment*? This latter statement may or may not be *true*, but it is no more equivalent to the *former*, than it is to a geometrical axiom. Or let us take such a case as would be most favourable to Mr. Mill's argument; the case of one whom he would regard as amongst the greatest benefactors of his species. "How noble," Mr. Mill would say, "was the self-sacrificing generosity of Howard the philanthropist!" Would he merely mean by this, that Howard's generosity *conduced immensely to general enjoyment*? He would be the first indignantly to disclaim so poor an interpretation of his words. By the term "noble," then, "or "morally good," Mr. Mill means much more than "conducive to general enjoyment."

But the particular idea—"moral evil"—deserves our especial consideration, as exhibiting in clearest light the

peculiar character of moral judgments. Take any very obvious case of wickedness. Consider, *e.g.*, the judgment elicited by David concerning his own past course of action, when Nathan had said to him, "Thou art the man." Or suppose I had been guilty of such conduct in an exaggerated shape, as that ascribed to Lord Bacon (truly or falsely) by Lord Macaulay. A politician of high and unblemished moral character, with whose political principles I am heartily in accordance, has admitted me to his friendship and trusted me with his dearest secrets. I find, however, as time goes on, that my best chance of advancement lies in attaching myself to the opposite side. Filled with passionate desire for such advancement, I make political capital by disclosing my friend's confidences to his opponents; and I embark heartily in a course of political enterprise, which has for its end his ruin. As I am about to reap the worldly fruit of my labours, I am seized with a violent illness: and in the tedious hours of slow recovery, I "enter into myself," to use the expression of ascetical writers; I bitterly repent the past; I judge that my successive acts have been "*sinful*," "*wicked*." I judge, as a consequence of this, that I have rendered myself worthy of punishment; that if there be a Moral Governor of the Universe, He views my conduct with detestation; etc. We are not at this moment alleging that these various judgments are *true*, but only considering their correct analysis. And surely Mr. Mill will not on reflection maintain, that when I am pondering on the moral turpitude of my past conduct, I am in fact merely thinking of its evil effects on general enjoyment. Doubtless, when I reflect on the malitia of having supported a political cause which I deem unsound, I base this malitia greatly on the evil which I have thereby tried to inflict on my country; but I base it also in part on the *concomitant* judgment, that to inflict such injury is intrinsically evil. And when I reflect on the malitia of my

ingratitude, and of my having perfidiously violated my friend's confidence,—in all probability the question does not ever so distantly present itself, whether general enjoyment is promoted or retarded by such practices.

We are arguing against the theory which we provisionally ascribe to Mr. Mill, viz. that the idea "morally good" is equivalent with the idea "conducive to general enjoyment." But it seems to us that this whole matter may be clenched, so as to render all evasion impossible. If this theory were true, it would be a simply *tautologous* proposition to say, that "conduct, known by the agent as adverse to general enjoyment, is morally evil." This proposition, we say, would be as simply tautologous, as the proposition that "two mutual friends desire each other's well-being," or the proposition, that "a hard substance resists muscular pressure." These two latter propositions are really *tautologous*: for a desire of each other's well-being is expressed by the *very term* "mutual friends;" and "resistance to muscular pressure" is expressed by the *very term* "hard substance." Now, it is an evident logical truth, that the contradictory of a tautologous proposition is simply unmeaning, because its predicate denies that very thing which its subject affirms. (See "Mill on Hamilton," p. 92.) "There are two mutual friends of my acquaintance, who do not desire each other's well-being;"—"some hard substances I have met with do not resist muscular pressure;"—for any *meaning* that such propositions convey, we might even better (to use Mr. Mill's illustration) say that "every Humpty Dumpty is an Abraçadabra." Let us look again, then, at the proposition, that "conduct, known by the agent as averse to general enjoyment, is morally evil." If this proposition were tautologous, its contradictory would be unmeaning; it would be simply *unmeaning* to say, that "some conduct, known by the agent as averse to general enjoyment, may be morally good." Will Mr. Mill hum-

*self* say that this is unmeaning? On the contrary, the energetic protest with which he would encounter its enunciation, sufficiently evinces how clearly he apprehends its tenor.

Indeed, Mr. Mill himself, in a very remarkable passage which we shall quote at length before we conclude, contradicts the doctrine which we are here opposing. He says in effect, that it would be morally better for all mankind to undergo eternal torment than to worship such or such a being, whom he imagines and describes. Now, most certainly eternal torment, endured by all mankind, is *less conducive to general enjoyment* than would be the worship of such a being, and Mr. Mill does not therefore consider "morally good" as synonymous with "conducive to general enjoyment."

Arguments entirely similar to those which we have here given would equally suffice to disprove any *other* analysis which might be attempted, of the idea "morally good;" and we conclude, therefore, that this idea is simple and incapable of analysis.

We are now in a position to consider satisfactorily the direct point at issue: the self-evident necessity of certain moral truths. Let us go back to the moral judgments on which we have already dwelt; the moral judgments, elicited on his sick-bed by the recently unscrupulous politician. Take any one of their number: for instance, "my divulging what my friend told me in confidence, was morally evil." We maintain that this judgment is the cognition of a self-evidently necessary truth.

On this point let us refer to the remarks we made in our second essay, on the notes of a self-evidently necessary truth, and let us apply them to the case before us. It is known to me by my very idea of this my act—so soon as I choose carefully to consider it—that it was morally evil; I intue irresistibly, that in no possible sphere



of existence—the relevant circumstances remaining unchanged—could such an act be otherwise; that omnipotence itself could not prevent such an act from being intrinsically base and abominable.\* In other words, if it be a self-evidently necessary truth (see pp. 36, 37 of our last essay) that a trilateral figure is triangular,—it is no less indubitably a self-evidently necessary truth, that such an act as we are considering is morally evil.

How may we consider Mr. Mill to stand in reference to this argument? He agrees with us, of course, that mankind do again and again form legitimately, and with good reason, what we have called “moral judgments:” judgments reducible to the type “act A is morally good,” or “act B is morally evil,” or “act C is morally better than act D.” He adds, however, what is quite true, that we have no right to consider any of these judgments *intuitive*, until we have clearly shown that they are not *inferential*. for, as he most justly observes, inferences from experience are often so obviously and spontaneously drawn, that unless we are very wary we may most easily mistake them for intuitions. We

\* We do not for a moment forget the power, possessed by God, of changing (as theologians express it) the “*materia*” of the Natural Law, but the existence of this power, so far from conflicting with, on the contrary confirms, what is said in the text. The classical instance in point is the command imposed by God on Abraham, of sacrificing his son, and what all Catholic theologians say is this. God, as the Creator of mankind, could (without disparagement of His sanctity) inflict death on Isaac or on any one else, and it is no more repugnant to His Attributes that He should do this\*by human intermediation, than that He should do it directly. God’s command, then, intrinsically changed the *circumstances* of Abraham’s act, if the morality of the act was intrinsically necessary, and external to the sphere of God’s Power. It would have been intrinsically wrong in Abraham, if he had refused to slay Isaac when commanded to do so as God’s vicergerent, and God Himself could not make such refusal innocent. On the other hand, it would have been no less necessarily wrong to slay Isaac *on his own authority*; and God Himself could not make such slaughter innocent.

It should be added, that no such “*mutatio materiae*” can affect the internal acts and dispositions of the will. For instance, God could not possibly command His reasonable creatures to hate each other, and still less to hate Himself. Dr Ward has stated this doctrine at length as clearly as he could, “*Philosophical Introduction*,” pp 165-190.

are next, therefore, to show, that there are indubitably some moral judgments, which are not inferential. Our argument runs thus.

If the idea "morally good" be really simple—as we consider ourselves to have now conclusively established—then that idea cannot possibly be contained in the conclusion of any syllogism, unless it be expressly found in one of the premisses.\* Take, then, any one of those moral judgments, which Mr. Mill admits to be legitimately formed. If he alleges that that judgment is an *inference*—as indeed it very possibly *may* be—he does but shift his difficulty, and in no respect lessens it. If the judgment be really the conclusion of a syllogism, then, as we have said, that syllogism must contain some *other* moral judgment as one of its premisses. If this premiss be itself a conclusion, we are thrown back on an earlier moral premiss, until at length we come to some moral judgment, which is immediate and not inferential. If this primary moral premiss be not cognizable as true, then neither is the ultimate *conclusion* so cognizable: and this is against the hypothesis; for Mr. Mill admits that many moral judgments *are* cognizable as true, and it is one of these which we are here considering. If, on the other hand, the primary moral premiss *be* cognizable as true, then a moral proposition is cognizable as true, which is not inferred from experience; and Mr. Mill is obliged to abandon the keystone of his position.

It seems to us, then, that the real issue between Mr. Mill and ourselves turns on the question, whether the idea "morally good" be capable of analysis. If it means "conducive to general enjoyment," then no doubt all moral judgments are inferential and founded on experience; but

\* If "morally good" were a complex idea,—it might be contained, of course, in the conclusion of a syllogism, without appearing in the premisses except in its constituent elements.

if it be incapable of analysis, then a certain number of moral judgments must be intuitive. And if Mr. Mill once admits that they are intuitive, he will certainly find no difficulty in further admitting, that they are cognitions of self-evidently necessary truths.

We have worded our argument throughout, in harmony with the opinion which to us seems true (see our last essay, pp. 48, 49), that axioms are first intued in the individual case, though capable of being universalized. According to this view, what Catholics call "the first principles" of morality, are simply these universalized axioms. Firstly, for instance, I intue, as a self-evidently necessary truth, that my own betrayal of my friend's confidence was intrinsically wicked; and I then further intue, as self-evidently necessary, that all such betrayal in really analogous circumstances possesses the same evil quality. Those philosophers, on the contrary, who hold that axioms are always intued in the universal, will regard every *individual* moral judgment as the conclusion of syllogistic reasoning, whereof some universal moral axiom has been a premiss. But their substantial argument against Mr. Mill may be precisely the same as our own.

Moreover, we have assumed throughout no other datum, except the one for which we argued in the first of these essays; viz. that whatever my cognitive faculties indubitably avouch, is infallibly true. The strong bias, of our own opinion is, that this is the very doctrine which Mr. Mill will call in question; but most certainly he has no right to do so. On one hand, no experience is possible to me—I have no knowledge whatever except of my present consciousness—unless I first unreservedly believe the truth of whatever my memory distinctly declares; while on the other hand (as we have more than once pointed out), Mr. Mill fully admits that I have no ground whatever for this belief, except the present

avouchment of my faculties. If my faculties convey to me infallible knowledge when they distinctly declare to me a certain past experience,—no less must they convey to me infallible knowledge, when they declare to me (if they do declare) the self-evident necessity of certain moral truths. If I do not firmly trust them in the latter avouchment, I have no right firmly to trust them in the former. Nay, I have really *stronger* grounds for accepting the distinct declarations of my moral faculty than the distinct declarations of my memory. In the first place intrinsically, it would be in some sense less utterly impossible to believe that I never did betray my friend's confidence, than to believe that such betrayal is not morally detestable. And in the second place extrinsically, I find these obvious *moral* judgments confirmed by every one I meet: whereas for the trustworthiness of my *memory*, I can have no external warrant at all; because my absolute trust in its testimony is a strictly requisite preliminary condition, in order that I may know or even guess what any one human being thinks or says. But we are to meet Mr. Mill in detail on this point a few pages hence.

This datum, then, being assumed, we consider that we have built thereon an argument absolutely irrefragable. We consider our reasoning to have established conclusively, (1) that the idea "morally good" is incapable of analysis; and (2) that various moral judgments are cognitions of self-evidently necessary truths. We may add, that if the Catholic reader desires to apprehend the relation which exists between necessary truth and the One Necessary Being, we would refer him to the *Dublin Review* for July, 1869, pp. 153, 154. We there stated with hearty concurrence F. Kleutgen's doctrine, that all necessary truths are *founded* on God; that they are what they are, because God is what He is.

Our next thesis is a very simple one; and indeed almost

(if not altogether) tautologous. All acts, morally good, are "admirable" and "praiseworthy;" all acts, morally evil, are "the reverse of admirable" and "blameworthy;" all acts are more admirable and more praiseworthy in proportion as they are morally better.

But now, lastly—in order to express the whole doctrine which we would place before our readers—we must make a very important supplement to what has hitherto been said. Let us renew our old picture. I am lying on a bed of illness, and looking back remorsefully on my shameful violation of my friend's confidence, and on a life of dishonest practices directed (as I myself knew) to the detriment of my country's highest interests. Not only I intue that a large number of my past acts have been morally evil, but I further intue that they violated the command of some living Personal Being.\* This is the further thesis, which we are now to advocate. The general axiom, we maintain, is cognizable, that all morally evil acts are prohibited by some living Personal Being.

Now, here let us distinctly explain our meaning. We by no means say—on the contrary, in an earlier part of our article we have denied—that the idea "morally evil" either includes or is equivalent with the idea "forbidden by some living Personal Being." The predicate of an axiom is not commonly included in, or equivalent with, the

\* "Ipsa ratio naturalis . . . discernendo actiones convenientes aut repugnantes naturæ humanæ, prohibitionem vel imperium divinum nobis offert" (Liberatore, *Ethica*, n 79) "Hoc" dictamen rationis "se audita quodam interno homo percipit, ut verè imperio aliquo se astringi sentiat . . . Cui voci intrinsecus præcipienti si quis non pareat, nec stimulus angitur ut ipsemet se accuset et arguat et poenam a supremæ quiddam potestate sibi infligendam expectet" (ib n 80) "Semper in illis" iudicis practiciis "involvitur obscurus saltem et indistinctus conceptus alicujus occultæ potestatis, . . . quæ objectivè spectata non est nisi Deus" (ib n 83). On the other hand "Divina voluntas bonitatem vel malitiam actionibus impertire non posset, nisi ante præsumatur bonum esse et honestum Deo præcipienti parere, turpe et illicitum reluctari Hoc non supposito, actio manebit indifferens etiam post Dei jussum vel prohibitionem" (ib n 27).

idea of its subject; for were it so, there would be no axioms except tautologies. Take the parallel case, on which we insisted in our last essay: "all trilaterals are triangular." So far is it from being true (as we there pointed out) that triangularity is included in the *idea* of trilateralness, that, on the contrary, I call a figure "trilateral" in the fullest sense of that word, before I have so much as considered any *question* as to the number of its angles. Nevertheless the proposition is axiomatic: because, to use F. Kleutgen's expression, "by merely considering the idea of the subject and predicate, I come to see that there exists between them that relation which the proposition expresses;" or (as we ourselves expressed the same thought) because, from my very conception of a trilateral, I know its triangularity.

This, then, is what we maintain in the present instance. If after such an ill-spent life as we have supposed, while lying on my sick-bed, I ponder in anguish of soul the idea "morally evil" as truly applicable to so many of my past acts,—I find myself to know, by my very conception of that attribute, that these acts have been acts of rebellion against some living personal authority, external to myself. We make this allegation, on the sole possible and the abundantly sufficient ground of an appeal to the indubitable facts of human nature. We say, "external to myself;" because to say merely that the lower part of my nature has rebelled against the higher, is absurdly inadequate to express my deep conviction. And we say "living personal authority," because it is still *more* absurd to suppose that there can be rebellion against an impersonal thing; least of all against an abstraction, which is in fact nothing at all. I intue, then, the axiom, that all morally evil acts are also forbidden me by some living personal authority external to myself.

It is of vital moment here to make manifest how completely distinct are the two ideas; "morally evil" on one

hand, and "prohibited by a Personal Being" on the other. For this purpose, let us take the following proposition:—"to do what is prohibited by my Creator is to do an act morally evil." A moment's consideration will show that this proposition has an entirely distinct sense from the purely tautological one, that "what is prohibited by my Creator is prohibited by a Personal Being." The term "morally evil" expresses an idea entirely external to, over and above, the idea expressed by the term "prohibited by a Personal Being." And as, on the one hand, it is no tautology, but an axiom, that "to do what is prohibited by my Holy Creator is to do an act morally evil;" so, on the other hand, we are here urging that it is no tautology, but an axiom, that "all acts morally evil are prohibited by some Personal Being."

But further, as Viva argues,\* this Personal Being has on me such paramount claims, that though all other beings in the universe solicited me in an opposite direction, my obligation would in no degree be affected, of submitting myself unreservedly to His command. His Will, then, is more peremptorily authoritative than the united will of all existent or possible beings who are not He.

Nay, further—and this is put by F. Franzeln†—moral laws hold good for all persons existent or possible; all other persons, therefore, existent, or possible, are as unreservedly subject to His command as I am. Consequently He is no less than Supreme Legislator of the universe.

F. Kleutgen expresses substantially the same doctrine with Viva and Franzeln, where he says that, "when we vividly represent to ourselves our imperfection and dependence," "God makes Himself felt within us by His moral law, as an August Power to which we are subject."

\* Treating the condemned proposition on "philosophical sin"

† "De Deo Uno," p 52

But there are further facts of human nature to which F. Newman conclusively appeals, as showing how universal and how undeniably intuitive is man's conviction, that acts morally evil are offences against a Supreme Ruler. We will remind our readers indeed of what we have already said concerning F. Newman's use of the word "conscience." But we need hardly beg them to observe how singularly his remarks combine exquisite beauty of expression with strong and irresistible appeal to facts. The italics are our own.

In consequence of this prerogative of dictating and commanding, which is of its essence, Conscience has an intimate bearing on our affections and emotions, leading us to reverence and awe, hope and fear, especially fear. . . . No fear is felt by any one who recognizes that his conduct has not been beautiful, though he may be mortified at himself, if perhaps he has thereby forfeited some advantage, but, if he has been betrayed into any kind of immorality, he has a lively sense of responsibility and guilt, though the act be no offence against society, of distress and apprehension, even though it may be of present service to him, of compunction and regret, though in itself it be most pleasurable, *of confusion of face, though it may have no witnesses.* These various perturbations of mind, which are characteristic of a bad conscience, and may be very considerable, self-reproach, poignant shame, haunting remorse, chill dismay at the prospect of the future, and their contraries, when the conscience is good, as real though less forcible, self-approval, inward peace, lightness of heart, and the like, these emotions constitute a generic difference between conscience and our other intellectual senses, common sense, good sense, sense of expedience, taste, sense of honour, and the like. . . .

*Conscience always involves the recognition of a living object, towards which it is directed.* Inanimate things cannot stir our affections these are correlative with persons. If, as is the case, we feel responsibility, are ashamed, are frightened, at transgressing the voice of conscience, *this implies that there is One to whom we are responsible*, before whom we are ashamed, whose claim upon us we fear. If, on doing wrong, we feel the same tearful, broken-hearted sorrow which overwhelms us on hurting a mother, if, on doing right, we enjoy the same sunny serenity of



mind, the same soothing satisfactory delight, which follows on our receiving praise from a father, *we certainly have within us the image of some person*, to whom our love and veneration look, in whose smile we find our happiness, for whom we yearn, towards whom we direct our pleadings, in whose anger we are troubled and waste away. These feelings in us are such as *require for their exciting cause an intelligent being*: we are not affectionate towards a stone, nor do we feel shame before a horse or a dog; we have no remorse or compunction on breaking mere human law, yet, so it is, conscience excites all these painful emotions, confusion, foreboding, self-condemnation; and, on the other hand, it sheds upon us a deep peace, a sense of security, a resignation, and a hope, which there is no sensible, no earthly object to elicit. "The wicked flees, when no one pursueth," then why does he flee? whence his terror? *Who is it that he sees in solitude, in darkness, in the hidden chambers of his heart?* If the cause of these emotions does not belong to this visible world, the Object to which his perception is directed must be Supernatural and Divine, and thus the phenomena of Conscience, as a dictate, avail to impress the imagination with the picture of a Supreme Governor, a Judge, holy, just, powerful, all-seeing, retributive; and is the creative principle of religion (pp. 104-7).

We affirm then, as an axiom, that all acts morally evil are prohibited by some Living Person external to the agent; and we affirm as an obvious inference, that this Person is Supreme Legislator of the Universe.\*

We may sufficiently sum up what we have now main-

\* It seems to us (speaking with all diffidence) that the view expressed by us in the text is serviceable, on two different doctrinal heads, in harmonizing Catholic writers with themselves, with each other, and with facts. Thus firstly Liberatore, Dmowski, and (we think) all modern Catholic philosophers, hold, on the one hand, that God (according to human modes of conception) cognizes any given act as intrinsically evil, antecedently to prohibiting it by the Natural Law, and yet they hold that, in intuiting its moral evil, men spontaneously and inevitably cognize the fact of its being prohibited by some Supreme Legislator. It is not easy to see how these statements can be combined, except according to the exposition which we have drawn out.

Then, for another matter of doctrine. The vast majority of theologians follow S. Thomas in holding, that the existence of God is not "*per se nota quoad nos*," though they regard it as a truth, *deducible* from first principles by a very obvious and immediate consequence. On the other hand, it

tained, in three propositions: (1) the idea "morally good" or "morally evil" is simple and incapable of analysis; (2) there are various human acts self-evidently known to be morally evil; (3) such acts are further known to be prohibited by a Supreme Ruler of the Universe. If Mr. Mill admitted the two former of these propositions, he would feel no difficulty in the third: in considering, therefore, the objections he may be expected to bring against our doctrine, we will for brevity's sake dismiss from consideration the last of our three above-named theses.

These objections, as in other similar instances, may be of two different kinds: they may be objections against the *reasoning* adduced for our conclusion, or they may be objections against the conclusion itself. Of the former kind, there is only one which occurs to us as possible; and we believe this to be the very objection on which Mr. Mill will mainly insist. Take the judgment, applied to some very obviously immoral act—"act B is morally evil." Mr. Mill may probably admit, both that this judgment is immediate, and also that the idea "morally evil" is perfectly simple: yet he may allege that such an avouchment is not intuitive, because it would not have issued from the mind at the time when the mind's revelations were in *their pristine purity*. The quality of immediately\* eliciting on occasion this or that moral judgment, however indubitably *now* possessed, may be no part (Mr. Mill will say) of the mind's *original constitution*, but on the contrary may result, by natural process, from various experiences,

is admitted by all, that a large number of moral axioms are self-evident and intuitively known, while yet those very writers, who deny that God's existence is "*per se nota quoad nos*," say that some knowledge of God is included in the cognition of a moral axiom. According to the view given in our text, the knowledge of a Supreme Legislator of the Universe is an *inference*—though a very prompt and obvious one—from the self-evident truths of morality

\* We need hardly say that we here use the word "immediately" as opposed to "inferentially"

through which every man has passed.\* Consequently (so he will conclude) this subjective persuasion is no guarantee whatever of objective truth. Such an objection brings us back to certain expressions of Mr. Mill's, on which we animadverted in the first of these essays, and which here again require comment.† But we must preface this comment by a brief exposition of terminology.

We believe there is no difference whatever, among those philosophers who use the word "intuition," as to the signification of that word. Of course nothing could be known at all unless some truths were known immediately and by their own light; and these are called "first truths." Moreover, it is absolutely indubitable, that the facts of "consciousness" properly so called—the mental phenomena which I experience at the present moment—are "first truths" to me. Now, the word "intuition" is used, by all who do use it, to express those *other* truths, over and above acts of consciousness, which are known to me immediately and by their own light. Sir W. Hamilton, however, uses the expression "acts of consciousness" to express *all* first truths: and we think never was there a mode of speech more exquisitely infelicitous, more singularly adapted to introduce equivocation and perplexity, and to surround the whole subject with almost impenetrable fog. Mr. Mill, while justly disapproving this use of language, yet (much to our regret) adopts it for purposes of argument with Sir W. Hamilton ("On Hamilton," p. 193 *et alibi*); and this

\* It should be explained that, in Mr. Mill's opinion, by a process of what he calls "mental chemistry," some idea may *result* from others of the past, while nevertheless in its *present* state it is simple and incapable of analysis (See "Logic" (seventh edition), vol. II p. 437) He calls such an idea indeed "complex," because (as he considers) it "*results from*," it has been "*generated by*," other ideas, but he adds, that it does not "*consist of*" simpler ideas, and its true name, therefore, in its present state is surely "simple"

† Since we wrote that article, we have again examined Mr. Mill's philosophical writings, with a special view to this question, and we find his meaning much more pronounced and unmistakable than we had fancied

fact must be remembered in looking at those passages of his, to which we shall presently refer. Let us now, therefore, pass from this question of words to the question of things.

The main thesis of the first essay in this volume, on "Certitude," was, that man's cognitive faculties infallibly testify objective truth; and, as part of this, that I intuitively know whatever my mind immediately avouches. We admitted expressly (in full agreement so far with Mr. Mill) that inferential judgments are again and again *mistaken* for intuitive ones; and in our present article accordingly we have shown (we trust) conclusively, that certain moral judgments are not inferential but immediate. Mr. Mill, however, in various passages goes much further than we have here implied. he affirms that the very thing, which my faculties now immediately declare, is not thereby intuitively known, and that I must not accept it as self-evidently true until I can show that it was declared by my intuitive faculties, at the time "when they received their first impressions;" "at the first beginning of my intellectual life;" when they were "in their state of pristine purity." See "On Hamilton," pp. 152, 160, 171, 176, 185; "Logic," vol. II. p. 439. In one place ("On Hamilton," p. 173, n.) he repudiates the opinion that man's intuitive faculties admit of development and improvement by means of practice; and in another (p. 172) implies that no one's intuitive faculties can be trusted, except an infant's "when he first opened his eyes to the light."

Now, the answer to all this is really very obvious and conclusive. There is one class of intuitions, of which Mr. Mill heartily admits the existence; those which are called acts of *memory*. In consistency, however, he must maintain that he can trust no avouchments of his memory, however clear and distinct, until he can show that that faculty, "at the first beginning of his intellectual life,"

before it had received "development and education," nay, "when he first opened his eyes to the light," would have been *capable* of those avouchments. But it is indubitable that he can never prove this; because, so soon as he *attempts* to prove it, he takes for granted at every turn the very thing to be proved, *viz.* the trustworthiness of his present memory. So long as Mr. Mill adheres to the philosophical tenet which we are opposing, he cannot in consistency have any reasonable ground whatever for trusting his memory; and *unless* he trusts his memory, he knows nothing whatever of any kind or description, *except only his mental experience of this particular moment.* In brief, there is no middle term whatever. Either the mind's *present* avouchment must be accepted as infallibly declaring objective truth, *or* blind, hopeless, and universal scepticism is the inevitable lot of mankind.

Here, also, we must repeat a remark which we made in our essay on "Certitude." Never was there a philosophical proposition more preposterously unfounded than that which Mr. Mill makes the foundation of his whole philosophy; *viz.* that the *primordial* avouchments of the human mind certainly correspond with objective truth. We may safely challenge him to allege so much as one colourable reason for this proposition, unless he first *assumes* that the mind's *present* avouchments are infallibly true. It is this *latter* proposition which is primarily certain; and the former proposition has no other evidence whatever, except of *inference* from the latter. He demes that very truth which alone can supply any reasonable ground for what stands as the sole basis of his intellectual speculations. Our reason for this confident statement will be at once understood by those who have read the essay to which we refer.

This is our answer to the objection which Mr. Mill will probably raise. We might have replied to it from an

entirely different point of view : for we confidently deny the psychological allegation on which it is built ; we confidently deny that men go through any series of experiences, which could by possibility have generated their present moral judgments. On this head we can refer to an unusually able article, contributed to the *Macmillan* of July, 1869, by Mr. R. H. Hutton, called "A Questionable Parentage of Morals." Mr. Hutton's arguments indeed are directly addressed against a theory ascribed by him to Mr. Herbert Spencer ; \* but they apply *à longè fortiori* to Mr. Mill's. For ourselves, however, we think it better to abstain altogether from this psychological question. We thus abstain, in order that our readers' attention may be more undividedly fixed on what we consider the glaring unreasonableness and utterly subversive tendency of that principle of Mr. Mill's, which alone could give any controversial *value* to such a psychological allegation. Never could we have expected so able a thinker as Mr. Mill to take up a position so relentlessly suicidal.

We hold, then, that no such objection will stand for a moment—or has so much as the slightest plausibility—against the reasoning adduced for our two theses. And since we know of no *other* objection, we assume that they are conclusively established. We next, therefore, proceed to consider such objections as may be raised against our theses themselves, and no longer against the arguments which we have adduced in their behalf. There is only one of these which impresses us as presenting any even superficial difficulty ; we refer to the divergence of moral standard, which has prevailed in different times and countries. Mr. Bain lays much stress on this in the chapter which we have named at the head of our essay, and which Mr. Mill (in his "Utilitarianism") commemorates with the warmest

\* We use this form of expression, because Mr. Spencer afterwards disclaimed that theory

commendation. Mr. Bain lays stress, *e.g.*, on such points as "the change that has come over men's sentiments on the subject of slavery" (p. 312). He lays stress, again, on the inexhaustible varieties of what may be called ritual morality: on such facts, as that the Mussulman women think it a duty to cover their faces in public (p. 300); the men to abstain from wine (p. 301); the Hindoos to venerate the cow (p. 308); the Buddhists to avoid animal food (*ib.*). How are such fundamental differences of moral judgment, he asks, consistent with any supposition that the first principles of moral truth are self-evidently known to mankind as universally and necessarily true?

F. Harper gives the true reply to this obvious objection, in the sixth of his papers contributed to the *Month* on F. Newman's "Grammar." "First," he says, "I observe with Sir J. Mackintosh, that people may differ as much as they please about what is right and wrong, but they all nevertheless agree that there is something right and something wrong." But further and more importantly, "we have forgotten the influence that the will has over the intellect in moral matters; and the influence again which passion, affection, prejudice, evil education, custom, have in such subjects over both. By means of these and similar causes, the perception of right and wrong has been blunted, often choked. Still more often it is liable to be misdirected." "These varieties, therefore," he adds, "of popular or national judgment, however extensive, prove nothing against the objective evidence and certitude of moral principles; or against the possibility of their subjective evidence and certainty, as reflected in the individual conscience when left free to its unbiassed determination and in its right balance."

The question, however, is of immeasurably more prominent importance in our controversy with Mr. Mill than it was in F. Harper's criticism of F. Newman; and we will therefore draw out, at much greater length and in our own way, what

is substantially identical alike with the doctrine of F Newman and F. Harper.

Firstly, however, we must observe, that phenomenists here are in the habit of trying most unfairly to shift the burden of proof from themselves to their opponents. We allege with confidence that we have demonstratively proved our theses. Unless, therefore, Mr. Bain *demonstrates* the validity of his objection, he does nothing whatever; for great probability on one side is simply valueless against *proof* on the other. At the same time, however, we do not for a moment admit that our antagonists can give even *probable* ground for the validity of their objection.

Then, further, we would point out that they appeal from what is known to what is unknown. I am most intimately aware of my own present or habitual thoughts and feelings: I am also in various degrees well acquainted with those of my friends, my compatriots, my contemporaries. Our antagonists appeal from these, to the sentiments of barbarous tribes, separated from me most widely by time or place or both, and of whose circumstances I know next to nothing. And they make this appeal on a question in which *everything depends on circumstances*; a very little divergence in these often sufficing to change an act from intrinsically evil to intrinsically good.

We now proceed to give our own explanation of the facts to which Mr. Bain has appealed; reminding our readers, however, that it is no business of ours to prove our explanation sufficient, but Mr. Bain's business to prove (if he can) that it is otherwise. We have already conclusively (we trust) established our position, Mr. Bain has no standing in court, unless he conclusively establishes *his*.

(1) Firstly, then, in one respect the most barbarous nations emphatically *confirm* our view. As F. Harper quotes from Mackintosh, they may differ as to what is right



or wrong, but they all agree that there is a right and a wrong. And so it has often been said—though the present writer has no such knowledge as would justify him in affirming it from his own researches—that every nation, however savage, has some word in its language to express “duty,” as distinct from “expediency.” Mr. Bain admits throughout, that all those to whom he appeals have that very same idea of what is meant by “right,” or “wrong,” or “moral obligation,” which is possessed by Europeans of the nineteenth century.\* It is true that he explains the origin and authority of this idea in a way fundamentally different from our own. But in raising *this* issue, he is amenable to the court of modern and civilized experience; and by considering the most undeniable facts of human nature as it exists around us, we are able (as we trust we have shown) conclusively to establish our own doctrine.

Now, (2) the number of moral axioms is by no means inconsiderable which are intued by all men possessing the use of reason throughout the world. In other words, men not only agree everywhere on the *existence* of a “right” and a “wrong,” but in no inconsiderable degree on the acts to which they *ascribe* those respective attributes. Take the two instances on which we have ourselves insisted: the sins of David, and of the dishonest and treacherous politician. In either case there is no one, capable of *understanding* such actions, who will not in his cool judgment condemn them without a moment’s hesitation. We say “in his cool judgment,” because it is manifest that men who are wholly absorbed and excited in the pursuit of some temporal end, refuse commonly even to *consider* the moral character of what they do. But otherwise, “there must be admitted to exist,” says Mr. Bain himself (p. 300), “a

\* For instance. “Every man may have the feeling of conscience, that is the feeling of moral reprobation and moral approbation. All men agree in *having these feelings*, though all do not agree in the *matters to which they are applied*” (pp 297, 298).

tolerably uniform sense of the necessity of recognizing some rights of individuals : " there are to a certain point ' eternal and immutable ' moral judgments . . . in ' the repudiation of the thief, the manslayer, and the rebel ; ' " and we may add, no less, of him who becomes the wanton enemy of his benefactor, or who for private ends violates his solemn promise, or who for personal reward inflicts on his country what he knows to be a heavy injury.

(8) We shall still further see the existing amount of agreement on moral matters, by another consideration. There are several classes of actions, on which there may be indeed no universally received axiom of the form " act B is morally evil "—where nevertheless all mankind agree in holding as self-evident that " act C is better than act D." Thus men everywhere will consider some course of conduct more *admirable* *cæteris paribus*, in proportion as it is more *unselfish*, however little they may agree as to what *amount* of selfishness is actually immoral. It is said, again, that the most barbarous nations regard celibacy as a higher state than marriage, while differing most widely from each other as to the limits of actual *obligation* in such matters. If this be true, we should be disposed to hold that the moral judgment in question is really cognized by all men as self-evidently true. For though Protestants earnestly repudiate this axiom, we should regard this as one of the not infrequent cases in which men refuse to recognize what they really cognize ; we should say that the preternatural hatred of these Protestants for Catholicity, in this as in many other cases, prevents their explicit perception of the most obvious moral truths. But there is no need whatever of insisting on this.\*

\* Mr Bain, when reciting cases in which " strong antipathies " have been arbitrarily " made into moral rules " (p 309), has the following shameless remark—" There has been a very prevailing disposition to restrict the indulgences of sex. Some practices are so violently abhorred, that they are not permitted even to be named " (p 316). We must do Mr. Mill the

(4) But no consideration perhaps so impressively shows the unanimity of moral conviction even *now* prevalent among mankind, as the following. All mankind, we say, are agreed in holding that justice, beneficence, veracity, fidelity to promises, gratitude, temperance, fortitude,—that these, and not their opposites, are the virtuous ends of action. By this phrase we mean to express two propositions. On the one hand, every act, otherwise faultless,\* is accounted by all men as good, if done for the sake of justice, beneficence, or any one of the rest, while, on the other hand, every act is accounted by all men to be evil, if it *contravene* these ends. Take any one in their number—say justice—as standing for the rest. Many men doubtless in various times and places have thought it right to do many an act, which Catholics know to be unjust: still they have never thought it right *because* unjust; they have never thought it right, for the sake of any virtuousness which they have supposed to reside in injustice; but because of the virtuousness of *beneficence*, or *gratitude*, or the like. Similarly, many men think an act wrong because they think it unjust, but they never think it wrong because they think it *just*. They regard this or that just act as wrong, because they regard it as opposed to *beneficence* or *gratitude*, but never because they regard it as required by *justice*. In one word, they think many an act good simply because prompted by *justice*; but they never think an act good because prompted by *injustice*. And the same remark applies, to the other virtuous ends of action which we have named above. A “good man,” in the judgment of all mankind, means “a man possessing in various degrees the justice to say, that no sentiment can be more violently opposed than this to his way of regarding similar subjects

\* We say “otherwise faultless,” because it is perhaps possible that an act, known to be intrinsically evil, may be done for the virtuousness of some good end. It is perhaps possible, *e g.*, that I may commit what I know to be a theft on A, for the virtuousness of benefiting some very deserving person B. For ourselves, however, we doubt whether this is possible.

qualities of justice, benevolence, veracity, fidelity to promises, gratitude, temperance, fortitude."

So much on the existing concurrence of moral judgments. Our further remarks are directed to explain the existing *divergence*.

(5) The moral faculty, like all other faculties and perhaps more than any other, is perfected by cultivation; and the means whereby it is cultivated is moral action.\* If I only know two or three moral axioms and no others whatever, I know that there are certain acts intrinsically wrong and prohibited by the Supreme Ruler; or, in other words, I know that there is a Natural Law—whether its extent be wide or narrow—possessing irrefragable claims on my obedience, and strictly binding, though the whole universe solicited me to rebellion. Every other course of conduct, then, is glaringly unreasonable, except (1) to obey its precepts carefully, so far as I know them; and (2) to use every means at my disposal—by interrogating my consciousness, by praying for light to this Supreme Ruler, and in every other attainable way—in order to discover the full extent of its enactments. In proportion as I give myself more energetically to this task—and specially in proportion as I labour, not only to comply with strict *obligation*, but to do what is morally the *better* and more pleasing therefore to my Supreme Ruler—in that proportion two results ensue. Firstly, the utterances of my moral faculty become far more readily distinguishable from all other intellectual suggestions;† and secondly, the number of moral axioms

\* Similarly F Harper, as we have seen, holds that the perception of right and wrong has been blunted, often choked, still more often misdirected, by passion, evil education, affection, prejudice, custom. He adds that "the great aim of a true education must be to strengthen the principle of law, and then to direct it in a right channel" F Newman, again, is constantly laying extreme stress on the proposition stated in the text.

† There is one special means by which moral judgments become more and more pointedly distinguished from all others, in proportion as the agent grows in a habit of virtue, viz. that they are so intimately connected with

within my cognizance is very rapidly increased. Certainly we maintain with confidence, that no man's intellect really avouches as self-evident a false moral verdict, on the case brought up to it for judgment. But nevertheless, in consistency with what has just been said, we have no difficulty whatever in admitting, (1) that those whose moral faculty is uncultivated may easily be mistaken as to its true utterances; and (2) that very often indeed they will see no wickedness in many an act, which those more advanced in moral discernment will intuitively cognize to be evil.

(6) We have said that no man's intellect avouches as self-evident a false moral verdict, *on the case brought up to it for judgment*, and we are now to express our meaning in this qualification, on which we lay great stress. The very notion of an "axiom"—as we have so often quoted from F. Kleutgen—is that it exists wherever, by merely comparing the *ideas* of subject and predicate, I come to see the truth of a proposition. But suppose those *ideas* did not correspond with *objective facts* in that case of course the supposed axiom is simply delusive, as *applied* to these facts. A first-rate lawyer may give a faultless judgment on a case

a sense of sin Moral perception grows so far more quickly than moral action, that a prevailing sense of sinfulness may be taken as an infallible measure of advance in true goodness It is a peculiar merit of F Newman's philosophy, to our mind, that he is ever so urgent in insisting on this Mr Lecky—whose views, as a whole, are to us simply revolting—nevertheless speaks well on this point. He criticizes ("European Morals," p 67, note) the language, so commonly found among philosophers of either self-love, about the delight which is supposed to accrue to every good man from the testimony of his approving conscience, and the pleasure which the good man is supposed to receive from *reflecting* on that delight, like "little Jack Horner," says Mr Lecky, "who said 'what a good boy am I!'" And he quotes a truly fatuous passage from Adam Smith "The man who . . . from proper motives has performed a generous action . . . feels himself . . . the natural object . . . of the esteem and approbation of all mankind [! ! !] And when he looks backward to the motive from which he acted, and surveys it in the light in which the indifferent spectator will survey it, he still continues to enter into it, and *applauds himself* by sympathy with the approbation of this supposed impartial judge In both these points of view his conduct appears to him in every way agreeable *Misery and wretchedness can never enter the breast in which dwelleth complete self-satisfaction."*

proposed to him for consideration; but if the case be wrongly drawn up, the judgment is valueless or mischievous. The same is true concerning *moral* judgments; and we will give one obvious instance. To the uninstructed and non-Catholic reader of that unprincipled book Pascal's "Provincial Letters," such a circumstance as the following will happen again and again. He will read in Pascal some propositions, advocated by illustrious Catholic casuists, and will regard it as axiomatic that they are immoral. And yet, if he comes to apprehend those very propositions as illustrated by the context and taken in connection with the general drift of these casuists, he will entirely revoke his former judgment, and not improbably accept as self-evident the very opposite.

This misstatement of the case is a most fruitful source of apparent divergences in moral judgment. Whether from prejudice and moral fault indefinitely varying in degree, or from mere intellectual inaccuracy and want of comprehensiveness, it happens again and again that men totally misapprehend the phenomena on which they judge. We may take an illustration from negro slavery, on which Mr. Bain twice insists (pp. 299, 312) as illustrating his theory. A and B are equally good men, and have therefore equally cultivated their moral faculty. A, however, has lived mostly among slaves, and is intimately acquainted with their circumstances and character. B, on the contrary, has derived his scanty information on the subject entirely from slaveholders; and, moreover, has never had any reason for pondering carefully on such light as the matter would receive, from the known laws of human nature. Some definite act of harshness to a slave will be cognized by A as self-evidently wrong; while B forms no moral judgment on it at all, axiomatic or otherwise. Mr. Bain himself admits in substance what we are now affirming. "When an abolitionist from Massachusetts," he says (p. 299)

"denounces the institution of slavery, and a clergyman of Carolina defends it, *both of them have in common the same sentiment of justice and injustice.*"

(7) There are other instances, which are explicable by a process very familiar to Mr. Mill. This writer is constantly pointing out, how very easily an *inference* may be mistaken for an *intuition*, and we have always heartily concurred in his remark. Now, many of the judgments cited by Mr. Bain, on the obligatoriness of some ritual observance, are conclusions of a syllogism. "Whatever the Supreme Ruler commands is of obligation: but He commands this; therefore this is of obligation." The only *moral axiom* here is the major premiss, which is indubitably true; and it is an historian's business, not a philosopher's, to trace the origin of the minor. Moreover, although some of these ritual observances should be both intrinsically immoral, and self-evidently *cognizable* as such by one who has duly cultivated his moral faculty, this admission (as is obvious) does not in any way affect our argument.

(8) In other cases, again, a moral judgment is the conclusion, not of unconscious, but of explicit and prolonged reasoning. Mr. Bain seems really to speak (p. 312) as though the question, whether slavery be or be not permissible, could be *axiomatically* answered. We do not ourselves think that it is capable of *any* universal solution; we think that what is permissible or even preferable in some circumstances, is intrinsically evil in others. But however this may be, the true conclusion can only be reached by a sustained process of reasoning—a process in which moral axioms doubtless play a large part, but in which a large part is *also* played by various psychological and social data. And the *moral axioms* will be precisely those premisses on which *both* parties in the controversy profess agreement.

(9) Finally, the instances are by no means few in which mere antipathy has been mistaken by philosophers for

moral disapprobation. It by no means follows, because some body of men abhor some practice, that they regard it as morally wrong. And, most fortunately for our purpose, it happens that we have irrefragable proof of this, in facts, which to the grandfathers of living Englishmen were matters of every-day experience. We refer to the time when *duelling* was of social obligation. Some hundred years ago, any layman who refused to fight a duel under circumstances in which public opinion required it, was treated as a veritable Pariah: he was received into no society of gentlemen; no gentleman would give him his daughter in marriage, nay, to associate with him was to be socially excommunicated. From such usages as these, had they occurred in some distant and very partially known period, Mr. Bain would have confidently inferred that those who practised them accounted as *morally evil* the refusal to fight duels; and yet no fact in the world is more certain than the reverse of this. These men were in general so firmly convinced of the truth of Christianity that they regarded with horror the very suspicion of infidelity. On the other hand, it is equally undeniable that they knew duelling to be forbidden by Christianity; because for this very reason no clergyman was expected to fight.\* Again, suppose one of themselves—a man too of otherwise profligate life—were lying on his death-bed: they would probably experience a momentary misgiving about his future lot; though they would very likely soon reassure themselves, by some blasphemous plausibilities about God's mercy. But suppose a man of spotless life were on his death-bed, who had been under their ban for his faithfulness to God and his consequent refusal to fight; the very notion would not occur to them, that he had placed his *salvation* in jeopardy by conduct which nevertheless they so intensely

\* See, in the *Dublin Review* for July, 1871, p 94, Dr Hampden's amazing letter to Mr Newman



abhorred. A defaulter was accounted by them "no gentleman;" but they never doubted that he might be an admirable Christian. They abhorred his act, because it indicated (as they thought) mental qualities, which to them were intensely distasteful; but not because they regarded it as wicked or sinful.

Some reader may object, that he cannot believe such absurd inconsistency to have existed in "enlightened" England of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We reply, firstly, that the facts are simply notorious, and that no one will dream of calling them in question. We reply, secondly, that we willingly concede one premiss on which this difficulty is based, viz. these men's ludicrous and contemptible inconsistency. There is no amount of imbecile and childish self-contradiction, we verily believe, which may not be expected from those truly pitiable persons, who deliberately permit themselves in any other course of conduct than that of labouring earnestly to make their conscience their one predominant rule of life.

Mr. Mill himself admits, that an unfavourable judgment is often formed of acts, which judgment is *mistaken* for one of moral disapprobation without being so. "All professed moralists," he says ("Dissertations," vol. i. pp. 386, 387), "treat the *moral* view of actions and characters . . . as if it were the sole one; whereas it is only one out of three. . . . According to the first, we approve or disapprove; according to the second, we admire or despise; according to the third, we love, pity, or dislike." \*

We pointed out above, that the *onus probandi* in this matter rests entirely with Mr. Mill and Mr. Bain. We are

\* We must incidentally protest against this doctrine of Mr. Mill's, so far as he applies it to what *ought* to be, and not merely to what *is*. In proportion as a man advances in virtue and love of God, in that proportion (we must maintain) he approaches to that state of mind in which he admires and loves those acts most which God most admires and loves, i. e. those which are most excellent.

in no respect called on to *prove* that we have correctly explained the facts on which they insist; but they are called on to *disprove*, if they can, the satisfactoriness of our explanation. We have proved our theses on ground totally distinct. They do not advance their cause one step, unless they demonstrate conclusively that their objection to those theses is valid; unless they demonstrate conclusively, that the existing variety of moral judgments cannot be explained by the considerations we have set forth, and by others which might be added. We are very confident not only that they *cannot* demonstrate this conclusively, but that they cannot render such an opinion even probable. Here, however, is the advantage of controversy with living men. If they honour us with their attention, we may beg them to name that particular instance of moral diversity on which they would especially insist, and to give their reasons for thinking that this instance is conclusive against our position. We promise beforehand that, if they make such attempt, we will give it most explicit notice, and grapple with it in the face of day.

There are no other objections to our doctrine—so far, at least, as we know of them—which impress us as having the slightest plausibility. Mr. Bain, *e.g.*, complains (p. 291) that objectivists assign no *standard* of moral truth. It might as well be said that they assign no standard of *mathematical* truth. A mathematical proposition is established, if it is either on one hand cognized as axiomatic, or on the other hand deduced from propositions which *are* so cognized; and precisely the same thing may be said of a moral proposition.

Supposing, indeed, Mr. Bain's opponents alleged that moral truth is purely subjective and created by the human mind, such an objection as his would be intelligible. But this is the very thing which is denied by objectivists in general, and most emphatically by Catholics in particular.

An evil action is undoubtedly called by them "*difformis rectæ rationi*;" but quite as often "*contraria naturæ hominis*," or "*perturbatio ordinis naturalis*." There is an objective "natural order" of actions, then, a *moral scale*, so to speak; and it is the office of human reason to recognize, not to create it.

It is a favourite argument of Mr. Mill's, that objectivism keeps moral science in a stationary state, and interferes with its legitimate progress. Now, the only progress of which, consistently with his principles, he can here be speaking is that which arises from fresh light being thrown on the *consequences* of this or that action. But objectivists hold as strongly as phenomenists, that the morality of actions is importantly affected by their consequences; and that any light therefore, thrown on the latter, importantly affects the former.

A *Catholic* philosopher, indeed, does undoubtedly hold that in a very true sense moral science is stationary; but this conclusion does not result from his objectivism, but from a different Catholic doctrine altogether. He considers that moral truths are an integral part of Divine Revelation; and that though, like other revealed verities, they admit elucidation and development, yet they are not progressive in that sense in which progressiveness may be truly ascribed to a purely secular science. But this whole question, though of the gravest moment, is entirely external to our present theme.

We are not aware of any other arguments which Mr. Mill has ever alleged against our position. And how insufficient those arguments are, may be seen from the very unsuspicious testimony of Mr. Mill himself, who has not been prevented by them from unconsciously embracing one principal part of the very doctrine which he opposes. He says with profoundest truth ("*Dissertations*," vol. i. p.

384), that "mankind are much more nearly of one nature than of one opinion about their own nature;" and it is the very reason of our own sympathy with many exhibitions of his personal character, that he has been quite unable to confine the breadth of his own nature within the limits of what we must call his own most narrow and *contra-natural* theory. His theory is purely phenomenistic; viz. that "morally good" is simply equivalent with "conducive to general enjoyment," and "morally evil" the reverse. Yet, in almost every page of his writing on moral and political subjects, he assumes the *transcendental* axiom, that "benevolence is morally good" and "malevolence is morally evil". the idea "morally good" being that very transcendental idea on which objectivists insist, but which Mr. Mill in theory regards as delusive.\* We are confident that all familiar with his writings will concur in this remark, when they understand what we mean. This view, constantly implicit, occasionally finds explicit mention. Thus, in a passage we shall immediately quote, he says in effect that a benevolent being *may*, but that a malevolent being can *not*, be a legitimate object of *worship*. Elsewhere he describes a habit of disinterested benevolence as the true "standard of excellence";† he affirms ("On Hamilton," p. 128) that he "loves and venerates" moral goodness; and says ("Dissertations," vol. iv. p. 340) that "the cultivation of a disinterested preference of duty for its own sake"

\* On the terms "phenomenistic" and "transcendental," see pp 1, 2, 61, 62.

† "Man is never recognized by" Bentham "as a being capable of desiring for its own sake the conformity of his own character to his standard of excellence, without hope of good or fear of evil from other source than his own inward consciousness" ("Dissertations," vol i p 359) But one "coequal part" of morality "is self-education, the training by the human being himself of his affection and will" (ib p 363) into accordance, of course, with the true "standard of excellence" We assume that the habit of disinterested benevolence is what Mr Mill here intends to describe as the "true standard of excellence," for otherwise he would be more inconsistent with his professed principles, than we even allege him to be.

is a *higher* state than that of sacrificing selfish preferences to a more distant self-interest." What can he mean by the word "excellence," or the word "venerate," or the word "higher," consistently with his theory? Undoubtedly he is at liberty, without transcending the bounds of phenomenism, to allege that benevolence is *beneficent* and conducive to the *happiness of mankind*: for happiness consists in a series of phenomena, and experience can teach what conduces to the *increase* of such phenomena. But Mr. Mill constantly goes further than this: he calls a habit of disinterested benevolence "high," "excellent," worthy of "veneration," and the like. What right has the phenomenist to such notions as these? What *phenomena* do these notions represent? Wherein is their objective counterpart discerned by *experience*?

But there is perhaps no one passage throughout his entire works, in which Mr. Mill so unveils his innermost nature—nor is there any other to our mind so eloquent—as the following well-known invective of his, against a view ascribed by him to Dean Mansel.

If instead of the "glad tidings" that there exists a Being in whom all the excellences which the highest human mind can conceive exist in a degree inconceivable to us, I am informed that the world is ruled by a being, whose attributes are infinite, but what they are we cannot learn, or what are the principles of his government, except that "the highest human morality which we are capable of conceiving" does not sanction them,—convince me of it, and I will bear my fate as I may. But when I am told that I must believe this and at the same time call this being by the names which express and affirm the highest human morality, I say in plain terms that I will not. Whatever power such a being may have over me, there is one thing which he shall not do; he shall not compel me to worship him. I will call no being good, who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow-creatures; and if such a being can sentence me to hell for not so calling him, to hell I will go." ("On Hamilton," pp 123, 124)

We have two preliminary remarks to make on this most impressive passage before using it against Mr. Mill's consistency. In the first place, all Catholics will substantially agree with what we understand to be its doctrine. Let the impossible and appalling supposition be put for argument's sake, that men had been created by a malignant being, who commanded them to cherish habits of pride, envy, mutual hatred, and sensuality. The case is of course utterly and wildly impossible; but supposing it, undoubtedly men would be strictly obliged, at whatever sacrifice, both to disobey those commands and to withhold worship from the being who could issue them.\* In the second place, we are quite confident that Dean Mansel meant no such doctrine as Mr. Mill supposes, though we cannot acquit him of having expressed himself with singular incautiousness.

The first inference we draw against Mr. Mill's consistency from the passage just quoted, has been already expressed. He accounts malevolence not merely to be maleficent—which is all that can be said by a consistent phenomenist—but as intrinsically evil and base; so evil and base, that he would rather undergo eternal torment than worship a malevolent being.

But secondly, he brings utilitarianism to a distinct issue; for he says in effect that all men, individually and collectively, should rather undergo everlasting torment than worship a malignant being who commands them to do so. His professed theory—the fundamental principle of his whole moral philosophy—is that morality consists exclusively and precisely in promoting the happiness of one's fellow-creatures. Yet here he says, that in a particular

\* On the other hand, we should say that they would *also* be under an obligation of not doing that which would impair their permanent happiness. Nor, of course, is there any difficulty whatever in the circumstance that an intrinsically impossible hypothesis issues legitimately in two mutually contradictory conclusions

case the true morality of all men would lie in promoting, not the happiness, but the everlasting torment of all mankind.\* He says, in effect, that all men would act basely and wickedly if they worshipped a malevolent being. And he cannot possibly mean, by the words "basely" and "wickedly," that they would act "*adversely to the promotion of general enjoyment*;" because he holds that this baseness and wickedness would remain, even if such conduct were the sole means of exempting all mankind from an eternity of woe. When a crucial case really comes before him, his better nature compels him to decide sternly, peremptorily, effusively, indignantly, against his own doctrine.

We have now concluded our own case. We must forego what would have been a great accession to our argument, by being obliged to postpone our detailed consideration of Mr. Mill's own moral scheme. But we have already reached the extreme bounds which we had prescribed to ourselves; and, in what remains of our present essay, can give no more than a most perfunctory criticism of Mr. Mill's doctrine.

Through his whole philosophical career, that gentleman has consistently and most earnestly disclaimed what he calls "the selfish theory;" the theory which regards morality as consisting in enlightened self-interest. On the other hand, as we have just pointed out, he cannot; consistently with his phenomenism, admit the existence of transcendental virtue or transcendental obligation; he cannot speak of benevolence as intrinsically excellent, or of its opposite as intrinsically detestable. Disclaiming thus at once the morality of self-interest and the morality of transcendental goodness, it is difficult at first to see what

\* This remark has already been made by Mr. Mivart, in his admirable "Genesis of Species" (p. 194). He states himself to have derived it from Rev. Father Roberts

possible footing is left him ; yet he is not left entirely without means of answering the relevant questions. Thus we may ask, what men *mean* when they say that A's conduct is morally detestable, and they therefore abhor it ; while B's conduct is morally good, and they therefore approve it. They mean to express—so Mr. Mill may reply without inconsistency—on the one hand, that abhorrence which arises in their mind from a sense that A's habits tend to their grievous detriment ; and on the other hand, that complacency which arises in their mind from a sense that B's conduct tends to their enjoyment. See *e.g.* “Dissertations,” vol. i. pp. 155, 156, “On Hamilton,” p. 572. But then we further ask Mr. Mill, why should I, a given individual, aim, not at my own interest, but that of my fellow-men ? why is it my reasonable course to sacrifice myself in their behalf ? And to this question, so far as we can see, his answer is glaringly inadequate. He will say indeed very truly, that there is an unselfish element in human nature ; that “the idea of the pain of another is naturally painful, and the idea of his pleasure naturally pleasurable” (“Dissertations,” vol. 1 p. 137), and that in this part of human nature lies a foundation, on which may be reared the habit of finding a constantly increasing part of my gratification in the happiness of others. Mr. Mill may further say, and indeed does say, that all mankind are prompted by the strongest motives of self-interest, so to educate each individual as that he *may* thus find gratification in other men's enjoyment. Nay, and he may add further still—though he would find much difficulty in proving this—that those who have *been* thus trained lead happier lives in consequence than they would otherwise have led. But when he has gone so far as this, he has exhausted his resources. He can give no reason whatever why I, a given individual, who have *not* been thus trained,—and who, as a simple matter of fact, find very much less pleasure in other men's enjoy-



ment than in my own—should sacrifice the latter in favour of the former.

We will illustrate the most essential and characteristic part of this doctrine by a little fable, wildly absurd from the standpoint of natural history, but none the less fitted to express our meaning. The cats and rats are in a state of internecine warfare, and the fleas, if left to their natural habits, perform acts which in various ways injure the former and benefit the latter. Moved by this circumstance, the cats capture a large number of young fleas, and train them to take their pleasure in acts which have an opposite tendency. The cats accordingly dearly prize the trained fleas, and the rats the natural fleas: so much is quite intelligible. But Mr. Mill should add, that the cats feel toward the trained fleas, and the rats towards the natural fleas, that very sentiment which is called in human matters "moral approbation;" while the rats feel towards the trained fleas, and the cats towards the natural fleas, the sentiment of "moral disapproval."

We are well aware, that Mr. Mill will indignantly repudiate the parallel. What we allege is, that his spontaneous view (so to call it) is directly contradictory to his speculative theory; that the doctrine constantly implied by him whenever he treats of human affairs, is that very objectivist doctrine which in theory he denounces. We do not of course mean that his implicit doctrine is *Theistical*; but we do say that it is *objectivist*, as ascribing intrinsic and transcendental excellence to the practice of beneficence. And the indignation with which he will regard such an analysis of moral sentiments as is contained in our little fable is to our mind a measure of his wide distance from the genuine utilitarian philosophy.

In theory, however, he has made his doctrine even more untenable, and (we must be allowed to add) even more odious, by his denial of human free will. There is perhaps

no one philosophical theme on which he has enlarged with so much earnestness and so much power as on this ; and yet, so weak is his cause, we think there is no one on which he can be so triumphantly refuted. In a future essay we shall, first, meet him, hand to hand and step to step, on this battle-field ; and we shall, secondly, express that detailed criticism on this moral system as a whole, which we had hoped to give on the present occasion.

#### IV.

#### MR. MILL'S REPLY TO THE "DUBLIN REVIEW."\*

[The following essay had been entirely completed in its first draft, and the greater portion of it actually sent to press, when intelligence arrived of Mr. Mill's unexpected death. Under these circumstances, we have been naturally led to look through the essay with renewed care, to see that it contain no particle of violence or bitterness; but on doing so we have found nothing to change in it, except one or two expressions which implied that Mr. Mill was still alive. Towards Mr. Mill, in fact, we were not likely to have fallen into undue harshness of language; and the less so, because he was himself habitually courteous to opponents, and especially to the present writer. On the other hand, we expressed an opinion in a former essay—an opinion to which we were led by various indications in his writings—that he was not a believer in the One True God Whom Christians worship; and whereas, when avowedly noticing our essay, he expressed no remonstrance on this head, we may fairly assume that our opinion was correct. Nor indeed does any one doubt that the tendency of his philosophy as a whole is intensely antitheistic, inasmuch that many ascribe the overthrow of religious belief, *e.g.* in Oxford, almost entirely to his influence. Now, it is the

\* *An Examination of Sir W Hamilton's Philosophy* By JOHN STUART MILL. Fourth Edition. London Longmans.

*A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive.* By JOHN STUART MILL Eighth Edition. London Longmans

firmly held doctrine of Catholics, that there is no invincible ignorance of the One True God; or, in other words, that disbelief in God convicts the disbeliever of grave sin: so that Catholics are confined within somewhat narrow limits as to the amount of respect towards such a writer, which they are at liberty to feel and to express. Our own personal sympathy with Mr. Mill on one or two points was so great, that we believe there was more danger of our transgressing those limits than of our committing the opposite fault.

One such point of sympathy was what always impressed us as his unselfishness; his zeal for what he believed the truth; and his preference of public over personal objects. Nor, again, must we fail to commemorate his earnest opposition to nationalism in every shape. He never spoke otherwise than with grave reprobation of that pseudo-patriotism, which implies that men can laudably direct a course of conduct to the mere pursuit of their country's temporal aggrandisement. His notions as to wherein man's highest good consists must be accounted by every Catholic deplorably erroneous; but he was thoroughly penetrated with the great truth, that the genuine patriot aims at his countrymen's highest good, and not at their worldly exaltation or glory.

A very able commentator on his character, in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of May 10th, considers that Mr. Mill "was by temperament essentially religious," and that his "absence of definite religious convictions" produced "a sharp contrast" in his mind "between theory and feeling." We quite agree with what is indicated by this remark. Mr. Mill possessed apparently passionate feelings of love, which were ever yearning for an adequate object; and he was, alas! ignorant of Him Who implants such feelings in order that they may be concentrated on Himself. It is in this way we should account for "that generous, self-sacrificing

philanthropy" which we commemorated in our above-named essay as "so attractive a feature in his character;" though we need hardly say how much more solid and reliable is such philanthropy (in the Catholic's judgment) where it is rested on the love of God. By the same characteristic of Mr. Mill's mind we should also account for language, in honour of his wife's memory, which otherwise would almost have induced us to doubt the writer's sanity. We are especially thinking, under this head, of his amazing preface to the essay on "the Enfranchisement of Women," contained in the second volume of his "Dissertations and Discussions;" and to the inscription on her gravestone.\* We confess that his possession of this loving temperament, however questionable its exhibition may have been in this or that particular, has ever given us a feeling towards him, quite different in kind from that which we can entertain towards any of his brother phenomenists.

Turning to his philosophical character—with which we are here of course more directly concerned—the following pages, taken by themselves, might be understood as implying a very far more disparaging estimate of that character than we really entertain. It so happens, indeed, that the particular controversy in which we are here engaged, deals almost exclusively with what we must account his weakest intellectual points. Among his strongest, we should name what may be called the "encyclopedic" quality of his mind—by which we intend to express not merely the extent of his knowledge and information (though this was indeed extraordinary), but his unflinching promptitude in seeing the connection between one part of that knowledge and another; his viewing every theme in which he might be engaged,

\* Here is one sentence of this epitaph "Were there even a few hearts and intellects like hers, this earth would already become the hoped-for heaven."

under the full light thrown on it by every fact which he knew and every doctrine which he held. Cognate to this was his sincere anxiety to apprehend his opponents' point of view, and to derive from their disquisitions all the instruction he could. Then, his historical and political studies went far below the mere husk of events; for he possessed (we think) great power of justly appreciating the broad facts of every-day life, whether as recorded in the past or witnessed in the present. His language, again, was the genuine correlative of his thought—clear, well-balanced, forcible. What we must deny to him, is any sufficient acquaintance with the subtler phenomena of mind.

This latter defect exhibited itself in two different ways. Firstly, it altogether vitiated his metaphysics. We consider that no really profound psychologist can be (as Mr. Mill was) a phenomenist, and, conversely, we think that Mr. Mill's deficiency in psychological insight generated an incapacity of doing justice to the arguments adduced against his metaphysical scheme. At the same time, however, we must state our own strong impression, that (whether from early prejudice or whatever cause) he never fully gave his mind, even so much as he *might* have done, to those particular psychological facts which are adduced by his opponents as lying at the foundation of their system; and we think that the following essay will suffice in itself to establish against him this charge.

Another consequence (we think) resulting from his unacquaintance with the subtler phenomena of mind, was his tendency to the wildest speculations on such themes as "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity." As we have already said, Mr. Mill was very largely acquainted with facts, both past and present: but in such speculations as those to which we refer, facts could give him no guidance; and he had no other clue to assist him in his researches except such as was afforded by (what we must

be allowed to call) his shallow and narrow knowledge of human nature.

We may perhaps say without impropriety, that Mr. Mill's death is to us a matter of severe controversial disappointment. We had far more hope of coming to some understanding with *him* than with such writers as Mr. Herbert Spencer and Dr. Bain, because he was in the habit of apprehending and expressing his own thoughts so much more definitely and perspicuously than they. Our present essay, indeed, originally concluded with an earnest appeal to him, that he would join issue on the themes therein handled, more fully than he could do by mere isolated footnotes and appendices. For the same reason we shall continue to treat him as representing the anti-theistic school. His books are not dead, because *he* is dead; and we think that they both are in fact, and are legitimately calculated to be, very far more influential than those of his brother phenomenists. We pointed out in an earlier essay that, by singling out an individual opponent, we did but follow his own excellent example, and we may here add that Sir W. Hamilton had died before Mr. Mill commenced his assault.

On looking through our present paper, it occurs to us that some may complain of what they may consider its undue vehemence on such a purely speculative subject as the character of mathematical axioms. But Mr. Mill himself, we are convinced, would have been the last to make this complaint. No other inquiry can be imagined so pregnant with awful consequences, as the inquiry whether a Personal God do or do not exist. It is this very doctrine (as we have more than once explained) which we are vindicating in our present series of articles. Now, the proposition that there exists a vast body of necessary truth may well be (as we are convinced it is) a vitally important philosophical preface to the *further* proposition that there exists a Necessary

Person.\* But the doctrine that there exists a vast body of necessary truth is so startling *a priori*, and is pregnant also with consequences so momentous, that the philosopher will require absolutely irresistible evidence before he will accept it. It is most desirable, therefore, that it shall be considered, as far as may be, on its own merits; that it shall be detached from other topics, on which men's affections, antipathies, misapprehensions, prejudices, will inevitably obscure and complicate their judgment. Now, just such a neutral ground is afforded by *mathematical* truth, and we placed it therefore in the very front of our controversial position. It affords an excellent opportunity for considering the characteristics of necessary truth as such, because no one can have any religious or moral prejudice for or against any given mathematical theorem.

It has also occurred to us as possible, that the following essay may be accounted arrogant in its tone towards so powerful and eminent a thinker as Mr. Mill. But let our position be considered. As regards the particular themes herein treated, we are deliberately of opinion, not that there is more to be said on our side than on Mr. Mill's, but that he is utterly and simply in the wrong; that not one of his arguments has the slightest force, and hardly one of them the most superficial appearance of force. Now, if a Catholic honestly thinks this, he should make his readers distinctly *understand* that he thinks it; because he must know that the welfare of immortal souls suffers grievous injury, from an exaggerated estimate of the argumentative ground available for disbelief.]

We have said on a former occasion that Mr. Mill has

\* The truth, known by Revelation, that there are Three Necessary Persons in no way conflicts (we need hardly say) with the truth, known by Reason, that there exists One Necessary Person.



always been "singularly clear in statement, accessible to argument, and candid or rather generous towards opponents ;" and the whole tone of his replies to the *Dublin Review* is in full accordance with this estimate of his controversial qualities. At the same time, it was his conviction no less than our own, that the highest interests of mankind are intimately involved in the prevalence of sound doctrine on the matters in debate ; while on our side we further know that these interests are inappreciable in magnitude and eternal in duration. It is our bounden duty, therefore, to do everything we can to expose what we consider the unreasonableness and shallowness of those phenomenistic tenets which Mr. Mill has embraced. Of those tenets we must ever affirm with confidence that they are (as we have just implied) not unreasonable only, but incredibly shallow ; and it is of extreme moment that this characteristic of theirs be fully understood. Yet the very weakness of a cause may in some sense set forth the ability of its advocate ; and our predominant feeling towards Mr. Mill is one of surprise, that so skilful and rarely accomplished a navigator should have embarked in so frail a vessel.

Without further preamble, however, let us commence our work by entering again on the matters treated in our first essay, and by seeing where Mr. Mill stands thereon in relation to ourselves. We begin, then, with "the rule and motive of certitude "

There is one truth which the extremest sceptic cannot possibly call in question, viz. that his inward consciousness, as experienced by him at the present moment, is what it is. To doubt this, as Mr. Mill observes, would be "to doubt that I feel what I feel." But this knowledge is utterly sterile, very far inferior to that possessed by the brutes ; and no one manifestly can possess knowledge worthy of being so called, unless he knows the phenomena, not only of his momentarily present consciousness, but also

(to a greater or less extent) of that consciousness which has now ceased to exist. A man cannot *e.g.* so much as understand the simplest sentence spoken to him, unless, while hearing the *last* word, he knows those words which have preceded it. We ask this question, then: what *means* has he of *possessing* this knowledge of the past? On what grounds can he reasonably accept, as true, the clearest and distinctest avouchments of his memory? "I am conscious of a most clear and articulate mental *impression* that a very short time ago I was suffering cold:" this is one judgment. "A very short time ago I was suffering cold:" this is another and totally distinct judgment. That a man knows his present *impression* of a past feeling, by no manner of means implies that he knows the past *existence* of that feeling. How do you know, we would have asked Mr. Mill, how do you know (on the above supposition of facts) that a very short time ago you *were* suffering cold? How do you know *e.g.* that Professor Huxley's suggestion\* is not the very truth? How do you know, in other words, that some powerful and malicious being is not at this moment deluding you into a *belief* that you were cold a short time ago, when the real fact was entirely otherwise? How do you know, in fact, that any one experience, which your memory testifies, ever really befel you at all?

It is plain, then, and most undeniable, that the philosopher cannot claim for men any knowledge whatever beyond that of their momentarily present consciousness, unless he establishes some theory on what scholastics call the "rule and motive of certitude." He must (1) lay down the "*rule* of certitude;" or, in other words, explain what is the characteristic of those truths which men may reasonably accept with certitude: and (2) he must lay down "the

\* "It is conceivable that some powerful and malicious being may find his pleasure in deluding us, and in making us believe the thing which is not every moment of our lives" ("Lay Sermons," p. 356)

'*motive of certitude*;' or, in other words, explain what is men's reasonable *ground* for accepting, as certain, those truths which possess such characteristic. It is conceivable, doubtless, that the principle he lays down may authenticate no other avouchments except those of memory; or it is conceivable, on the contrary, that that principle may authenticate a large number of *other* avouchments. But if he professes to be a philosopher at all, if he professes to establish any reasonable stronghold whatever against absolute and utter scepticism, some theory or other he *must* lay down, on the rule and motive of certitude. And such theory is, by absolute necessity, the one argumentative foundation of his whole system.

We maintained in our first essay, that it is the *scholastic* theory on this fundamental issue which alone is conformable with reason and with facts. This theory is of course set forth by different writers, with greater or less difference of detail and of expression; and we referred to F. Kleutgen as having enunciated it with singular clearness of exposition. Firstly, what is the *rule* of certitude? or, in other words, what is the characteristic of those truths which I may reasonably accept as certain? Every proposition, he replies, is known to me as a truth, which is avouched by my cognitive faculties when those faculties are exercised according to their intrinsic laws, whether they be thus exercised in declaring primary verities, or in deriving this or that inference from those verities. Secondly, what is the *motive* of certitude? or, in other words, what is my reasonable ground for *accepting* the above-named propositions as certainly true? He replies, that a created gift, called the light of reason, is possessed by the soul, whereby every man, while exercising his cognitive faculties according to their intrinsic laws, is rendered infallibly certain that their avouchments correspond with objective truth.

In advocating this theory, however, we guarded ourselves against two possible misconceptions of its bearing. We admitted, in the first place, how abundantly possible it is, nay, how frequently it happens, that men *misunderstand* the avouchment of their intellect. In fact a large part of our controversy with Mr. Mill proceeds on this very ground: we allege against him, that this, that, and the other proposition, which he denies, is really declared by the human faculties, when exercised according to their intrinsic laws. Then, secondly, we explained that our appeal is made to the mind's positive, not its negative constitution; or, in other words, that we lay our stress on its *affirmations*, not on its *incapacities*. It does not at all follow, we added, because the human mind cannot conceive some given proposition, that such proposition may not be true; nay, that it may not be most certain and inappreciably momentous. This statement appears to us of great importance, in regard to various controversies of the present day. But it has little or no bearing on the points directly at issue between Mr. Mill and ourselves.

Such, then, is the scholastic thesis, on the rule and motive of certitude; viz. that man's cognitive faculties, while acting on the laws of their constitution, carry with them in each particular case immediate evidence of absolute trustworthiness. It would be a contradiction almost in terms if we professed to adduce direct *arguments* for this thesis, because the very fact of adducing arguments would imply that *man's reasoning faculty can be trusted*, which is part of the very conclusion to be proved. But (1) we adduced for our thesis what appears to us strong *indirect* argument; and (2) (which is much more important) we suggested to the inquirer such mental experiments as are abundantly sufficient, we consider, to satisfy him of its truth. Under the latter head we appealed to each man's consciousness in our favour. That which his faculties

indubitably declare as certain, he finds himself under an absolute necessity of infallibly knowing to be true. I experience, *e.g.*, that phenomenon of the present moment, which I thus express: I say that I remember distinctly and articulately to have been much colder a few minutes ago when I was out in the snow, than I am now when sitting by a comfortable fire. Well, in consequence of this present mental phenomenon, I find myself under the absolute necessity of knowing that a very short time ago I *had* that experience which I now remember. Professor Huxley suggests that "some powerful and malicious being" may possibly "find his pleasure in deluding me," and in making me *fancy* as past what has never really happened to me; but I am absolutely necessitated to know that I am under no such delusion in regard to this recent experience. My act of memory is not merely known to me as a *present impression*, but carries with it also immediate evidence of representing a fact of my *past experience*. And so with my other intellectual operations, whether of reasoning or any other. The subjective operation, if performed according to the laws of my mental constitution, carries with it immediate evidence of corresponding with objective truth.

All must admit that this is at least a consistent and intelligible theory; and for several intellectually active centuries it reigned without a rival. Descartes, however, the great philosophical revolutionist of Christian times, substituted for it a strange and grotesque invention of his own. He held that each man's reason for knowing the trustworthiness of his faculties is his previous conviction of God's Existence and Veracity. Nothing can be more simply suicidal than this theory, because (as is manifest) unless I first know the trustworthiness of my cognitive faculties, I have no means of knowing as certain (or even guessing as probable) God's Existence and Veracity themselves. We insisted on this consideration in our first essay;

but as we are here in hearty concurrence with Mr. Mill, we need add no more on the present occasion. We fear that Descartes's theory possesses, more or less partially, not a few minds among the non-Catholic opponents of phenomenism.

But if certain non-Catholic opponents of phenomenism have exhibited shallowness in one direction, the whole body of phenomenists\* have exhibited still greater shallowness in another. They have universally assumed, as the basis of their whole philosophy, that each man knows with certitude the past existence of those experiences which his memory distinctly testifies. They admit of course that *unless* this certitude existed man would possess less knowledge than the very brutes; and yet, though its assumption is to them so absolutely vital, *not one of them has so much as entertained the question, on what ground it rests.* As we have already asked, how do they know, how can they reasonably even guess, that a man's present distinct *impression* of a supposed past experience corresponds with a past fact? Still more emphatically—how do they know that this is not only so in *one* instance, but in *every* instance? that man is so wonderfully made and endowed, that his present *impression* of what he has recently experienced always corresponds with what he has *in fact* so experienced? They make ~~this~~ prodigious assumption without the slightest attempt at giving a reason for it—nay, and without any apparent consciousness that a reason *needs* to be given. And then finally, as though to give a crowning touch of absurdity to their amazing position, they make it their special ground of invective against the opposite school of philosophy, that it arbitrarily erects,

\* There is only one exception with which we happen to be acquainted, viz that of Professor Huxley, which we presently mention in the text

By "phenomenists" (we need hardly say) we mean those philosophers who ascribe to mankind no immediate knowledge whatever except of phenomena.

into first principles of objective truth, the mere subjective impressions of the human mind. One could not have believed it possible that such shallowness should have characterized a whole school of philosophers—some of them, too, undoubtedly endowed with large knowledge and signal ability—were not the facts of the case patent and undeniable.

We mentioned just now, in a note, that an exception to this universality is afforded by Professor Huxley; and there may of course be other exceptions, with which we do not happen to be acquainted. In our first essay we quoted one of the Professor's remarks, to which we here refer. "The general trustworthiness of memory," he says, "is one of those hypothetical assumptions which cannot be proved or known with that highest degree of certainty which is given by immediate consciousness; but which, nevertheless, are of the highest practical value, inasmuch as the conclusions logically drawn from them are always verified by experience." To this singular piece of reasoning we put forth an obvious reply. You tell us that you trust your present act of memory because in innumerable past instances the avouchments of memory have been true. How do you know, how can you even guess, that there has been *one* such instance? Because you trust your present act of memory, no other answer can possibly be given. Never was there so audacious an instance of arguing in a circle. You know forsooth that your present act of memory can be trusted because in innumerable past instances the avouchment of memory has been true; and you know that in innumerable past instances the avouchment of memory has been true because you trust your present act of memory. The blind man leads the blind round a "circle" incurably "vicious."

Let us observe the Professor's philosophical position. It is his principle, that men know nothing with certitude

except their present consciousness. Now, on this principle, it is just as absurd to say that the facts testified by memory are *probably* as that they are *certainly* true. What can be more violently unscientific, we asked, from the stand-point of experimental science, than to assume without grounds as ever so faintly *probable* the very singular proposition, that mental phenomena (by some entirely unknown law) have proceeded in such a fashion that my clear *impression* of the past corresponds with my past *experience*? Professor Huxley possesses, no doubt, signal ability in his own line; but surely as a metaphysician he exhibits a sorry spectacle. He busies himself in his latter capacity with diligently overthrowing the only principle on which his researches as a physicist can have value or even meaning.

At present, however, our direct business is with Mr. Mill; and we are next to inquire how *his* philosophy stands in reference to the rule and motive of certitude. As to the *rule* of certitude, he speaks (it seems to us) so ambiguously as to make it a matter of no ordinary difficulty to discover which one of two contradictory propositions he intends to affirm; while, as to the *motive* of certitude, he unites with his brother phenomenists in shirking the question altogether.

We shall begin with urging against him this latter allegation. We did not bring it forward by any means so strongly in our former essay,\* because (as we shall explain further on) we had good reason for understanding him to admit much more in our favour than his present reply shows him to have intended. Even now we entirely concede that he (and again Dr. Bain) have made a distinct step beyond earlier writers of their school. They have advanced, we say, a little way beyond earlier writers, along the road which, if duly pursued, would have brought them

\* We only said, that he "has failed in clearly and consistently apprehending and bearing in mind the true doctrine"



into the observed presence of the question with which we are here engaged. Yet even *they*, we must maintain, have nowhere arrived at a distinct apprehension, that there is such a question to be considered as the motive of certitude.

With Dr. Bain we are not here concerned. ~~As to~~ Mr. Mill, the direct basis of our allegation against him is of course negative. He admits everywhere, that men's knowledge of their past experience is an absolutely indispensable condition for knowledge.\* But we believe no one place can be mentioned throughout his works in which he so much as professes to explain, on what *principle* it is that men can reasonably trust their memory as authenticating their past experience. At least, we protest we have been unable to find such a passage, though our search has been minute and laborious.

There is no part of his writings in which one might so reasonably have expected to find some doctrine on the motive of certitude, as in a passage on which we have before now laid some stress—a passage, indeed, which (for reasons presently to be given) we originally understood in a far more favourable sense than his subsequent explanation permits. He had said ("On Hamilton," p. 209, note) that "our belief in the veracity of memory is evidently ultimate," because "no reason can be given for it which does not presuppose the belief and assume it to be well grounded." On this we made the following comment in our second essay:—

He holds that there is just one intuition—one, only one—which carries with it [immediate] evidence of truth. There was an imperative claim on him then, as he valued his philosophical character, to explain clearly and pointedly, *where the distinction lies* between acts of memory and other alleged intuitions. He would have found the task very difficult, we

\* For instance. "All who have attempted the explanation of the human mind by sensation, have postulated the knowledge of past sensations as well as of present." ("On Hamilton," p. 210, note)

confidently affirm, but that only gives us more reason for complaining that he did not make the attempt. To us it seems that various classes of intuition are *more* favourably circumstanced for the establishment of their trustworthiness, than is that class which Mr. Mill accepts. Thus, in the case of many a wicked action, it would really be *easier* for the criminal to believe that he had never committed it than to doubt its necessary turpitude and detestableness. Then, in the case of other intuitions, I know that the rest of mankind share them with myself, and I often know, also, that experience confirms them as far as it goes; but I must confidently trust my acts of clear and distinct *memory*, before I can even guess what is *held* by other men or what is *declared* by experience.

Mr. Mill thus replies —

Dr. Ward with good reason challenges me to explain where the distinction lies, between acts of memory and other alleged intuitions which I do not admit as such. The distinction is, that as all the explanations of mental phenomena presuppose memory, memory itself cannot admit of being explained. Whenever this is shown to be true of any other part of our knowledge, I shall admit that part to be intuitive. Dr. Ward thinks that there are various other intuitions more favourably circumstanced for the establishment of their trustworthiness than memory itself, and he gives as an example our conviction of the wickedness of certain acts. My reason for rejecting this as a case of intuition is, that the conviction can be explained without presupposing as part of the explanation the very fact itself, which the belief in memory cannot.

Our readers, then, will observe that Mr. Mill, when expressly challenged, gives no other reason for his belief in the veracity of memory except only this. Memory, he says, must be assumed to be veracious, because "as all the explanations of mental phenomena presuppose memory, memory itself cannot admit of being explained:" or, in other words (as he expressed the same thought somewhat more clearly in his original note), because "no reason can be given for the veracity of memory which does not presuppose the belief and assume it to be well grounded."

But a moment's consideration will show that this answer implies a fundamental misconception of the point we had raised. The question which *he answers* is, whether my knowledge of past facts (*assuming that I have such knowledge*) is on the one hand an immediate and primary, or on the other hand a mediate and secondary, part of my knowledge.\* But the question which we asked was totally different from this. We asked, on what ground my belief of the facts testified by my memory can be accounted *part of my knowledge at all*. We asked, in short, on what reasonable ground can my conviction rest, that I ever experienced those sensations, emotions, thoughts, which my memory represents to me as past facts of my life?

We say that the question to which Mr. Mill has replied is fundamentally different from the question which we asked. Let it be *assumed* that my belief in the declarations of my memory is a real part of my knowledge, and nothing can be more pertinent than Mr. Mill's argument: he shows satisfactorily, that such belief must be an immediate and primary part of my knowledge, not a mediate and derivative part thereof. But when the very question asked is whether this belief be any part of my knowledge *at all*, Mr. Mill's reply is simply destitute of meaning. For consider. We may truly predicate of every false belief which ever was entertained—nay, of every false belief which can even be imagined—that “no” satisfactory “reason can be given for it which does not presuppose the belief and assume it to be well grounded.” If Mr. Mill, then, were here professing to prove the *trustworthiness* of memory, his argument would be this. “The declarations of memory,” he would be saying, “are certainly true, *because* they possess one attribute which is possessed by every *false* belief which was ever entertained or can even be imagined.”

\* Observe, *e.g.*, his words “Whenever this appears to be true of any other part of our knowledge.”

Or we may draw out against him, in a different shape, what is substantially the same argument. Mr. Mill's first business—as it is that of every philosopher—was to show that philosophy is *possible*; or, in other words, to place before ~~his~~ disciples reasonable grounds for rejecting the sceptical conclusion. Now, the sceptic's argument—as put, *e g.* (however inconsistently), by Professor Huxley—may be worded as follows:—"No knowledge is possible to me, except that which I possess at any given moment of my actually present consciousness. No knowledge is possible to me, I say, beyond this, because I cannot possibly acquire more except by knowing that the declarations of my memory may be trusted. But I see no ground whatever for knowing that these may be trusted. How can I guess but that—as the Professor suggests—some powerful and malicious being may find his pleasure in deluding me, and making me *fancy* myself to remember things which never happened? Nay, apart from that supposition, there may be ten thousand different agencies, to me unknown, which may have produced my present impression of a supposed past, not one of which agencies in any degree implies that this supposedly past experience was ever really mine." Mr. Mill, we say, was absolutely required to give reasonable ground for rejecting this view of things, under pain of forfeiting his position of "philosopher" altogether. Let us consider, then, how far the one argument which he gives for the trustworthiness of memory will enable him to oppose the sceptical view. His argument, if it can be logically expressed at all, consists of two syllogisms which we will draw out in form.

#### SYLLOGISM I.

Knowledge of much more than present consciousness is possible to human beings.

But such knowledge would not be possible, unless they had reasonable grounds for trusting their memory.

Therefore they have reasonable grounds for trusting their memory.

## SYLLOGISM II.

Men have reasonable grounds for trusting their memory (Conclusion of First Syllogism).

But they would not have such grounds, unless its veracity were immediately evident, (because "no *reason* can be given for it, which does not presuppose it").

Therefore the veracity of memory is immediately evident.

We beg our readers, then, to observe the character of this argument. It abandons all profession of replying to the sceptic at all, it assumes, as the very major premiss of its first syllogism, that precise proposition which the sceptic expressly and formally denies.

We infer from all this, that the question which we pressed on Mr. Mill, we will not say has not been *answered*, but has not even been *apprehended* by him. With him, as with other phenomenists, "the motive of certitude" is a "missing link" of the philosophical chain. Even if the merits of his philosophical *structure* were far greater than we can admit, no one can deny that it is entirely destitute of a *foundation*, that he has exhibited no grounds whatever on which inquirers can reasonably accept either his own conclusions or any one else's.

A similar view of his position is impressed on our mind by another paragraph, in which he treats the sceptical tenet more directly, and in which he shows again that he has not even a glimpse of the sceptic's true controversial status. It will be better to give this paragraph at length ;

and we need only explain, by way of preface, that he uses the word "consciousness," not in the sense in which *we* uniformly use it, and which he himself accounts the more usual and convenient, but in a totally different sense given to it by Sir W. Hamilton. We italicize one sentence:—

According to all philosophers, the evidence of consciousness, if only we can obtain it pure, is conclusive. *This is an obvious, but by no means a mere identical proposition.* If consciousness be defined as intuitive knowledge, it is indeed an identical proposition to say, that if we intuitively know anything, we do know it, and are sure of it. But the meaning lies in the implied assertion, that we do know some things immediately or intuitively. That we must do so is evident, if we know anything, for what we know mediately depends for its evidence on our previous knowledge of something else. unless, therefore, we know something immediately, we could not know anything mediately and consequently could not know anything at all. That imaginary being, a complete sceptic, might be supposed to answer, that perhaps we do not know anything at all. I shall not reply to this problematical antagonist in the usual manner, by telling him that if he does not know anything, I do. I put to him the simplest case conceivable of immediate knowledge, and ask if we ever feel anything? If so, then at the moment of feeling do we know that we feel? or, if he will not call this knowledge, will he deny that when we have a feeling we have at least some sort of assurance, or conviction, of having it? This assurance of conviction is what other people mean by knowledge. If he dislikes the word, I am willing in discussing with him to employ some other. By whatever name this assurance is called, it is the test to which we bring all our other convictions. He may say it is not certain, but such as it may be it is our model of certainty. We consider all our other assurances and convictions as more or less certain, according as they approach the standard of this. I have a conviction that there are icebergs on the Arctic seas. I have not the evidence of my senses for it. I never saw an iceberg. Neither do I intuitively believe it by a law of my mind. My conviction is mediate, grounded on testimony, and on inferences from physical laws. When I say I am convinced of it, I mean that the evidence is equal to that of my senses. I am as certain of the fact as if I had seen it.

And on a more complete analysis, when I say that I am convinced of it, what I am convinced of is that if I were in the Arctic seas I should see it. We mean by knowledge, and by certainty, an assurance similar and equal to that afforded by our senses. If the evidence in any other case can be brought up to this, we desire no more. If a person is not satisfied with this evidence, it is no concern of anybody but himself, nor practically of himself, since it is admitted that this evidence is what we must, and may in full confidence, act upon. Absolute scepticism, if there be such a thing, may be dismissed from discussion as raising an irrelevant issue, for in denying all knowledge it denies none. *The dogmatist may be quite satisfied if the doctrine he maintains can be attacked by no arguments, but those which apply to the evidence of our senses.* If his evidence is equal to that, he needs no more, nay, it is philosophically maintainable that by the laws of psychology we can conceive no more, and that this is the certainty we call perfect. ("On Hamilton," pp. 157, 158.)

This whole passage, as we have observed, is very significant. In the italicized sentence, Mr. Mill says that scepticism cannot be assailed by any arguments, except those which would overthrow "the evidence of the senses." Very short work would be made of this statement by a consistent follower of Professor Huxley. He would point, of course, to the undeniable fact, that men's belief in the "evidence of their senses" or in the phenomena of their consciousness at any given moment on one hand, and men's belief in anything else whatever on the other hand,—that these two beliefs rest respectively on grounds fundamentally different from each other. He would urge with irrefragable force, that the *former* belief is *independent* of the question whether their memory may or may not be trusted; whereas every *other* belief is destitute of so much as the hundredth part of a leg to stand on, unless the trustworthiness of memory be in some way made known to them. Of this vital fact in the controversy with sceptics, Mr. Mill seems absolutely and utterly unaware.

There is another passage of Mr. Mill's which we may

also adduce. We referred to it in our first essay; but now that we understand more clearly Mr. Mill's statements, we had better quote it entire :—

I must protest against adducing, as evidence of the truth of a fact in external nature, the disposition, however strong or however general, of the human mind to believe it. Belief is not proof, and does not dispense with the necessity of proof. I am aware, that to ask for evidence of a proposition which we are supposed to believe instinctively is to expose one's self to the charge of rejecting the authority of the human faculties, which of course no one can consistently do, since the human faculties are all which any one has to judge by and inasmuch as the meaning of the word evidence is supposed to be something which when laid before the mind induces it to believe, to demand evidence when belief is ensured by the mind's own laws, is supposed to be appealing to the intellect against the intellect. But this, I apprehend, is a misunderstanding of the nature of evidence. By evidence is not meant anything and everything which produces belief. There are many things which generate belief besides evidence. A mere strong association of ideas often causes a belief so intense as to be unshakable by experience or argument. Evidence is not that which the mind does or must yield to, but that which it ought to yield to, namely, that by yielding to which its belief is kept conformable to fact. There is no appeal from the human faculties generally, but there is an appeal from one human faculty to another, from the judging faculty to those which take cognisance of fact, the faculties of sense and consciousness. The legitimacy of this appeal is admitted whenever it is allowed that our judgments ought to be conformable to fact. To say that belief suffices for its own justification is making opinion the test of opinion, it is denying the existence of any outward standard, the conformity of an opinion to which constitutes the truth. We call one mode of forming opinions right and another wrong, because the one does, and the other does not, tend to make the opinion agree with fact—to make people believe what really is, and expect what really will be. Now, a mere disposition to believe, even if supposed instinctive, is no guarantee for the truth of the thing believed. If, indeed, the belief ever amounted to an irresistible necessity, there would then be no use in appealing from it, because there would be no possibility of altering it. But even



then the truth of the belief would not follow; it would only follow that mankind were under a permanent necessity of believing what might possibly not be true; in other words, that a case might occur in which our senses or consciousness, if they could be appealed to, might testify one thing, and our reason believe another — (“Logic,” vol. II pp. 96-98.)

Now, to begin with the opening sentences of this paragraph. Of course we admit that, under particular circumstances, there may be a strong disposition of the human mind to believe untrue propositions. But Mr. Mill's statement is very different from this. No disposition to believe, he says, “however strong or however general,” can evidence a fact. A more glaringly untenable philosophical statement never was put forth. There is literally no “fact in external nature,” great or small, which does *not* rest in last resort, for the “evidence of its truth,” *exclusively* on “the disposition of the human mind to believe it.” This is absolutely undeniable; for consider: No one fact can possibly be established, except through the past experience of human beings. Mr. Mill of all men will not deny this. But that human beings ever *had* this past experience is a fact to which not one with any show of reason could attach the least shred of credibility, were it not for the “disposition” of their “mind” to accept as true the declarations of their memory; and were it not for that inward gift possessed by them, whereby they know that this acceptance is reasonable. And a comment precisely similar might so easily be made on each successive sentence of the passage, that we should be guilty of tedious impertinence if we inflicted such comment on our readers' patience. Our inference is as before, that Mr. Mill, from wholly failing to apprehend the position of sceptics, has also wholly failed to apprehend the necessity of carefully considering “the motive of certitude.”

We have said, however, that Mr. Mill is one of two

phenomenist writers, who (as we think) have advanced a little way beyond earlier writers of their school, towards discerning the existence of this question. In Mr. Mill's case, we are here specially referring to the ninth chapter of his work "On Hamilton," concerning "the interpretation of consciousness." In p. 159 he cites the distinction drawn by Sir W. Hamilton, between the authority of what is commonly called consciousness on one hand, and of what is commonly called intuition on the other;\* and in pp. 162-3 he expresses hearty concurrence with this distinction.† Sir Wilham proceeds—still with Mr. Mill's full approval—to derive an instance of this distinction from the faculty of memory. "I cannot deny," he says (Mill, p. 160), "the *actual phenomenon*" that I have that present impression which I call an act of memory, "because my denial would be suicidal: but I can without self-contradiction assert that [present] consciousness may be a *false witness* in regard to any former existence; and I maintain, if I please, that the memory of the past, in consciousness, is nothing but a phenomenon, *which has no reality beyond the present.*" Mr. Mill, then, has here got hold of the truth, that the two beliefs—belief in the *present* existence of the act of memory, and belief in the *past* existence of those phenomena which memory testifies—that these two beliefs rest on foundations totally different from each other. It is passing strange, that he should have let this truth slip from his mind after having once apprehended it; that he should have failed to inquire accordingly, what is the basis on which beliefs of the latter kind reasonably rest; and above all, that at the

\* All those philosophers who use the word "intuitions" at all, use it in the same sense. They use it to express those truths which are not indeed mere facts of present consciousness, but which nevertheless are immediately and primarily known with certitude.

† These are Mr. Mill's words of approval—"By the conception and clear exposition of this distinction, Sir W. Hamilton has" shown "that, whatever be the positive value of his achievements in metaphysics, he has a greater capacity for the subject than many metaphysicians of high reputation."

beginning of this very chapter (at pp. 157-8) he should have expressed (as our readers have seen) an opinion directly *contrary* to that doctrine of Sir W. Hamilton's which he endorses in pp. 162-3.

We consider, then, that we have established a very grave charge indeed against Mr. Mill's philosophical character. It is the very first business of a philosopher to show that he has a *raison d'être*; that philosophy can exist; that human knowledge is possible. Those who hold that no human knowledge is possible, ground their opinion on the alleged impossibility of authenticating the avouchments of memory. Mr. Mill not only has not solved this difficulty, not only has not attempted to solve it, but has not even contemplated its existence. We are by no means implying that herein he is inferior to other phenomenists; on the contrary we have said that he is somewhat in advance of them: but what we wish to impress on our readers, is the incredible shallowness of the phenomenistic philosophy itself.

Mr. Mill has also replied to the *rest* of the criticism which we expressed in our second essay, on his treatment of the memory question, and this will be our proper place for dealing with his reply. One remark we made was, that his statement about memory constitutes "a most pointed exception to his school's general doctrine, and an exception which no phenomenist had made before." To this Mr. Mill answers ("On Hamilton," p. 210, note) that he "doubts whether we can point out any phenomenist who has not made it either expressly or by implication." We reply, that we had understood him to admit in his note—and we had excellent reason for so understanding him—much more than (as now appears) he ever intended. We understood him in his original note to express agreement with what was said in Dr. Ward's "Philosophical Introduction," on this particular theme.\* Now, the view set forth in that

\* Mr. Mill said "Our belief in the veracity of memory is evidently

work was identical with the view advocated in the preceding pages. Dr. Ward maintained, not merely that "the veracity of memory" in each particular case is *not* known by reasoning or by consciousness, but further that it *is* known with certitude by means of a gift which may be called the light of reason; that man's belief in the veracity of *memory* on one hand, and of present *consciousness* on the other, rest on grounds fundamentally different from each other; but that *each* rests on evidence abundantly sufficient. Dr. Ward, we may add, laid his main stress on the proposition, that the trustworthiness of *memory*, in any given case *whatever*, is known, not at all by consciousness, but by the mind's own inward light. We had no other notion, then, but that Mr. Mill intended to express *concurrence* with this opinion. And even if we had otherwise doubted this, we should have been strongly confirmed in our existing impression by that comment of Mr. Mill's on Sir W. Hamilton which we so recently quoted. How were we to guess that the same writer, who praised Sir Wilham so warmly for his "conception and clear exposition of this distinction," did not himself *recognize* the distinction? We consider, therefore (as we have more than once said in the preceding pages), that we had excellent reasons for considering Mr. Mill's view to be coincident with our own on the motive of certitude; and we now can only regret our inevitable mistake. We said in our first essay, that he "failed in consistently apprehending and bearing in mind" what we regard as "the true doctrine," but we now see that he never in any way held it. Our readers, then, will understand what was the view which we inevitably (though it now appears mistakenly) ascribed to Mr. Mill: and this

ultimate," etc. "This point is forcibly urged in" Dr Ward's "Philosophical Introduction," "a book showing a capacity in the writer," etc, etc. Nor did Mr. Mill give the most distant hint that he differed from Dr. Ward's view of the subject in its most essential particular.

being so, we easily defend the criticism expressed by us in our second essay. If Mr. Mill's doctrine had been what we supposed, it would have constituted "a most pointed exception to his school's general doctrine;" for we are certainly not aware of a single phenomenist writer, anterior to Mr. Mill, who had so much as a glimpse of it.

Mr. Mill further takes exception to our remark, that "if there ever were a paradoxical position, his is one on the surface." But it will now be understood that we were speaking of the position which we inevitably *mistook* for his, and not of that which he really intended to assume. We understood him to concur with our doctrine, that the soul of man possesses a special gift, given for the very purpose of authenticating intuitions. On such a supposition we do think it paradoxical to hold that there is just one class of intuitions and no more. But we need hardly say that the statement is of no controversial importance, and we willingly withdraw it.

We confess, however, with regret one piece of carelessness, which Mr. Mill has pointed out. We did not sufficiently bear in mind that he had "avowedly left the question open, whether our perception of our own personality is not" another "case of the same kind;" another case of intuition.

We now pass from Mr. Mill's doctrine (or rather absence of doctrine) on the *motive*, of certitude, to his doctrine on the *rule* thereof. In particular as regards primary truths: what is the characteristic, we should have liked to ask him, of those judgments which man may reasonably accept as immediately and primarily evident? F. Kleutgen answers—and we are heartily in accord—that all those and only those judgments may reasonably be accepted as immediately evident which man's existing cognitive faculties immediately avouch as certain.

Now, whether it be taken as proof of Mr. Mill's obscurity or of our own dulness, certain it is that on *this* point also,

when we wrote our first essay, we considered Mr. Mill's doctrine to be far nearer our own than it really is. We were led astray by such passages as the following, which we quoted in p. 26 :—"The verdict of our immediate and intuitive conviction is admitted on all hands to be a decision without appeal." "As regards almost all, if not all, philosophers"—and by his very phrase (we said) he implies that *he* at all events is no dissentient—"the questions which divided them have never turned on the veracity of consciousness:" where (as we explained) he is, by his own express avowal, using the word "consciousness" in Sir W. Hamilton's sense of "immediate and intuitive conviction." What Sir W. Hamilton calls "the testimony of consciousness," so Mr. Mill proceeds, "to something beyond itself, may be and is denied, but what is denied has almost always been that consciousness gives the testimony, *not that if given it must be believed.*" We might have added other similar statements. Thus (p. 137). "what consciousness *directly reveals*, together with what can be legitimately inferred from its revelations, composes *by universal admission* all that we know." "All agree with" Sir W. Hamilton (p. 165), "in the position itself, that a real fact of consciousness cannot be denied." These sentences, one would have thought, are most plain and unmistakable in their assertion, that whatever is declared by men's "immediate and intuitive conviction" is indubitably true. Then there was another reason also for crediting Mr. Mill with the same theory, viz. that, according to this interpretation of his words, he would have laid down a solid basis for his belief in the veracity of memory. If those judgments may reasonably be accepted as primarily evident, which man's existing cognitive faculties immediately avouch as certain, then the various declarations of memory indubitably rank among primarily evident truths.

In the same essay, however, we quoted other sentences

of Mr. Mill, which point to quite a different—indeed, a directly contradictory—theory on the rule of certitude. This theory is, that no judgment can be reasonably accepted by me as immediately evident which would not have been declared by my cognitive faculties *in their earliest and primordial state*.<sup>\*</sup> And the sentences of Mr. Mill, which we quoted as seeming to express this theory, are such as the following. Men should only accept, he says, “what consciousness told them at *the time when its revelations were in their pristine purity*.” “We have no means of interrogating consciousness *in the only circumstances in which it is possible for it to give a trustworthy answer*.” And we might have added several others even stronger. That which is “a fact of our consciousness *in its present artificial state*” may possibly “have no claim to the title of a fact of consciousness generally, or to *the unlimited credence given to what is originally consciousness*” (p. 163). “We cannot study *the original elements of our mind* in the facts of our *present consciousness*” (p. 179). “Could we try the experiment of *the first consciousness in any infant* . . . whatever was present *in that first consciousness* would be *the genuine testimony of consciousness*” (p. 178). And accordingly Mr. Mill complains, that “in all Sir W. Hamilton’s writings” no “single instance can be found in which, before registering a belief as a part of our consciousness *from the beginning*, he thinks it necessary to ascertain that *it has not grown up subsequently*” (p. 181). Of course Sir W. Hamilton never dreamed of the strange tenet here taken for granted by Mr. Mill. He never dreamed of the tenet, that what he called “consciousness”—*i.e.*, as Mr.

\* We expressed this theory, however, somewhat incorrectly Mr Mill, we said, “seems to imply that *the laws of man’s mental constitution are changed during his progress from infancy to manhood*.” The theory we are criticizing has faults enough of its own to answer for, but need not be understood as involving so great a paradox as this Mr Mill pointed out to us this misapprehension in a private letter

Mill himself explains, "immediate and intuitive conviction"—is no rule of certitude, except as regards its primordial avouchments.

This tenet, indeed—we must really be allowed to say—is so transparently shallow that we were very unwilling to believe it could be Mr. Mill's. In our first essay accordingly we declared, "we cannot persuade ourselves that he really means what he seems to say." When, however, we looked more narrowly at Mr. Mill's language with a view to our *third* essay, we arrived at a different conclusion; and "we found his meaning," as we said, "much more pronounced and unmistakable than we had fancied." We observed particularly (what had escaped our notice) that he alleges this theory *in direct opposition* to the other, as his reason for upholding what he calls the "psychological" as contrasted with the "introspective" method of philosophizing ("On Hamilton," p. 179). This consideration is decisive. We are obliged accordingly to credit this grave writer with the theory which he so energetically professes, and to understand him as holding that no declaration of my cognitive faculties is trustworthy, unless it be a declaration which those faculties would have put forth when I was "an infant;" when I "first opened my eyes to the light" ("On Hamilton," p. 178).

Certainly he has here assumed very solid ground against necessitists.\* He may very safely challenge them to show, if they can, that when they were infants, first opening their eyes to the light, their faculties would have avouched as a necessary truth the triangularity of trilaterals, or the divergency of two intersecting straight lines. But then he absolutely slaughters *himself*, by the weapon which he raises against his opponents. We would thus address one

\* The word "necessarian" is irretrievably appropriated to the purpose of designating those who deny *free will*. We have coined, therefore, the word in the text, to express an idea for which some word or other is urgently needed.



of his disciples. You are very confident, doubtless, that you really experienced this or that fact, which you remember to have occurred *an hour or so ago*, and you will very readily admit that if such memory were *not* trustworthy, experimental science would be even more utterly impossible than metaphysical. Yet have you any ground (even the faintest) for even *conjecturing*, that when you were a new-born infant—or, for that matter, when you were a baby half a year old—your memory could truly testify the experience of your last hour? Of course not. When, therefore, Mr. Mill assumes the trustworthiness, whether of his own or other men's memory, he is suicidally abandoning the "psychological," and contenting himself with the "introspective" method. Or, in other words, that "psychological" method, which he regards as the one safeguard of sound philosophy, overthrows the whole possibility of experimental science.

But, in fact, we are greatly understating the case. Take any one of Mr. Mill's living disciples. We have been saying that, on his own theory, the avouchments of his present memory are not primarily and immediately known by him as true. But in our third essay we have further urged, that (on his own theory) he has no means of even making the *inquiry* whether they be true or no. He cannot, we say, so much as begin to investigate the *question* whether his existing memory be trustworthy, without *taking for granted* that it is so; for, unless he trust his existing memory, he cannot so much as draw the most obvious of conclusions from the simplest of premisses. But if he takes for granted that the avouchments of his present memory are true, then he is taking the present, and not the primordial, declaration of his faculties as his rule of certitude. We cannot conjecture why Mr. Mill has left wholly unanswered this very direct objection, which we had so clearly and definitely expressed.

So far we have argued against this amazing theory from its *consequences*. We have maintained that, by upholding it, Mr. Mill inflicts on himself no less a calamity than that of philosophical suicide. Let us now in turn consider the same theory as regards the *evidence adducible for its truth*. It is necessarily an essential part of the foundation on which Mr. Mill's whole philosophy rests; and we have a right to expect, therefore, that it shall itself be inexpugnable. Yet was there ever, we ask, a more gratuitous and arbitrary dictum than that whatever men's faculties declared in their primordial condition, is infallibly true? On what ground (from his point of view) could Mr. Mill even *guess*, that whatever a baby's memory distinctly testifies is infallibly true? Was there ever otherwise such a basis as this attempted for a philosophical system? such a foundation as this laid down as the one support of all human knowledge? The whole mass of human knowledge is made utterly dependent on what is about the most gratuitous and arbitrary hypothesis which can well be imagined.

Do we, then, ourselves, Mr. Mill might ask, doubt that the avouchment of men's faculties in their earlier state is infallibly true? Speaking generally, we do not doubt this at all; though we should be sorry to commit ourselves on Mr. Mill's case, of the new-born infant first opening his eyes to the light. But we maintain confidently that the veracity of my *primordial* faculties—instead of being a primary truth—is an *inference* from the veracity of my *present* faculties. Our position is most intelligible. Whatever my existing faculties indubitably declare I am under a necessity of infallibly knowing to be true, and I infer from this fact that I possess a special gift (called by scholastics the light of reason) which authenticates the veracity of these faculties. Of these none is more vitally essential than that of memory; and by means of this

faculty I know with infallible certainty a large number of facts in my past life. Looking back at these, I find myself to have possessed, at every period to which my memory reaches, the same light of reason which I possess now; and I infer, therefore, that then, no less than now, my faculties were veracious. In one word, the veracity of men's faculties in their *earlier* state is inferred from their *present* veracity; whereas Mr. Mill, by a preposterous inversion of the natural order, would authenticate the present by means of the past.

Such is the contrast we would draw between the theories of what may respectively be called "primordial" and "existing" certitude. At the same time, we have been uniformly careful to urge that there may be serious mistakes in interpreting the *avouchment* of men's existing faculties. Particularly, we altogether admitted in our first essay, "that again and again *inferences* are so readily and imperceptibly drawn as to be most easily mistaken for *intuitions*." In accordance with this we proceeded to say, that "in arguing hereafter with Mr. Mill we shall have no right of alleging aught as certainly a primitive truth without proving that it cannot be an opinion derived inferentially from experience." In our third essay we acted sedulously on this principle: we argued carefully that those moral judgments, which we were maintaining to be intuitive, could not possibly be derived from experience, however rapid and imperceptible the process of inference might be supposed to be. We have no means of knowing on what ground Mr. Mill would base his opposition to the conclusions of that essay; but we still strongly incline to the opinion there expressed, that he would oppose it in no other way than by falling back on his own amazing theory of *primordial* certitude.

In regard to our second essay, our impression is different. The main purpose of that essay was to establish

against Mr. Mill the doctrine that the whole body of mathematical truth possesses the attribute of *necessity*. Now, if Mr. Mill really admitted that men's cognitive faculties in their existing state declare this doctrine, and if he denied the doctrine on no other ground than that the faculties of a new-born infant would give no such testimony, we should consider him abundantly refuted by the preceding remarks. But we still think, as we thought when we wrote the essay, that he assumes ground far stronger and more plausible than this. He alleges, we think, that necessists do not accurately analyze the declaration of their *existing* faculties. I consider myself *e.g.* to cognize, as a self-evident and necessary truth, that every trilateral figure is triangular: but Mr. Mill would reply, that experience has most unexceptionally united in my mind the two ideas of trilateralness and triangularity; and that accordingly I *mistake* for intuition what is really a rapid and unconscious inference from experience. In the remaining part of our essay, then, this is the issue to be handled. And in this later part of our discussion we are far more favourably circumstanced than we have been in our earlier. Hitherto we have trodden ground on which Mr. Mill can hardly be said to have entered into express controversy with us at all, because of his silence on our first essay, and on that part of our third which is connected therewith. But as to our second essay—on the necessary character of mathematical truth—he has encountered us explicitly, and said all which he deemed necessary for our refutation. We have the immense advantage, therefore, of knowing all which can be said against us by that opponent, who is (to our mind), immeasurably the ablest and most persuasive of his school.

Certainly at the outset, Mr. Mill's theory on mathematical axioms is very startling. If I were asked what are

those truths which are best known to me by constant and uniform experience, all the world except phenomenist philosophers would be greatly surprised by any hesitation in my reply. The truths, I should answer, best known to me by constant and uniform experience are such as these : that fire burns ; that water quenches fire ; that wood floats on water, while stones sink therein, etc. But Mr. Mill tells me, that this reply is a complete mistake ; that there is *another* class of truths, known to me by experience with an immeasurably greater degree of familiarity than those just mentioned. I ask in amazement to what truths he can possibly be referring ; and he tells me, to such as these : that trilaterals are triangular, and that intersecting straight lines mutually diverge. This is indubitably his proposition ; for consider : I have no tendency whatever to regard the *former* class of truths (the effect of water upon fire, etc.) as eternal and immutable ; whereas he assures me, that my considering the *latter* class (the triangularity of trilaterals, etc.) to possess these attributes arises exclusively from their having been to me such constant matters of experience. He considers, therefore, that the triangularity of trilaterals has been to me an immeasurably more constant matter of experience than have been the most familiar and every-day properties of fire and water. And while this is indubitably Mr. Mill's thesis, no less indubitably at first hearing it startles me beyond expression. Ask the vast majority of Englishmen how often they have observed that fire burns or that water quenches it ; they will reply they have experienced it almost every day of their lives. Ask them, on the contrary, how often they have observed that trilaterals are triangular ; they will tell you that they have never to their knowledge experienced it from the day they were born. Mr. Mill's statement, then, is assuredly on the surface a startling paradox ; and we are confident that closer examination will show

it to be undeniably and demonstrably erroneous. This closer examination is what we are now to undertake, and we will begin with reciting certain argumentative preliminaries :—

I. We did not in our essay attempt any analysis of the word "necessary," nor even inquire whether such analysis is possible. "Our present purpose," we said, "will lead us only to attempt such a delineation and embodiment of this idea as shall make clear the point at issue. When we call a proposition "necessary," then, we mean to say that its contradictory is an intrinsically impossible chimera; is that which could not be found in any possible state of existence; which even Omnipotence would be unable to effect." To this explanation of the word Mr. Mill's silence gives consent.

II. Mr. Mill himself is a phenomenist, one who avowedly denies the cognizableness of necessary truth as such. If he admitted that there is so much as one science which is conversant throughout with necessary truth, he would, *ipso facto*, be going over bag and baggage to what is now his enemies' camp. It was well worth while, then, as we said, "to choose some special field whereon to join issue as a specimen of the rest." Now, "there is one particular class of truths, which will be generally accepted as in every respect most fitted to effect a clear and salient result." Our contention then was, that *mathematical* truths—vast and inexhaustible as is their number—are cognizable by mankind as necessary.

III. But it was possible very greatly to narrow this issue. "Mr. Mill will not of course deny that, if mathematical *axioms* are necessary, the validity of syllogistic reasoning must be also a necessary verity; and that the whole body, therefore, of mathematical truth possesses the same character." Our thesis was accordingly, "that mathematical *axioms* (arithmetical, algebraic, geometrical)

are self-evidently necessary truths." And by the term "axioms," for the purpose of our discussion, we understood "those verities which mathematicians assume as indubitably true, and use as the first premisses of their science." Mr. Mill tacitly accepts all this as a fair and straightforward joining of issue.

IV. We next come to a question of words. It is plain that propositions may be divided, if we please, into two classes: those which express no more than has been already expressed by the subject, and those which do express more. Now, it so happens that a distinction, substantially similar to this, is of vital importance in the discussion between necessists and phenomenists; and it is very desirable, therefore, that *names* shall be given to the two above-named classes. All non-Catholics since Kant, of either school, have used the words "analytical" and "synthetical" for this purpose. But a Catholic cannot so use these words without risk of serious misconception, because Catholic philosophy has affixed to them quite a different sense. What Catholics mean by calling a proposition "analytical"—so F. Kleutgen explains—is that "by simply considering the idea of the subject and predicate, one comes to see that there exists between them that relation which the proposition expresses." But, as we shall immediately urge, a most important class of those propositions which non-Catholics call "synthetical" possess the very property mentioned by F. Kleutgen; and these are accordingly denominated by Catholics "analytical." In our second essay, we attempted to evade this difficulty by calling these two classes respectively "tautologous" and "significant." An able writer, however, in the *Spectator* was reasonably led by this nomenclature to misunderstand some of our remarks; and we cannot ourselves, on consideration, defend its appropriateness. We will adopt, therefore, the words used by Sir W. Hamilton

for the purpose before us, and will use the two words, "explicative," "ampliative." From this, moreover, we obtain the incidental advantage, that these two phrases are to our mind really more fitted to express the intended distinction than the other two.

We will define, then, these two terms thus. "Explicative" propositions are those which declare no more than that some idea (1) is, or (2) is not, identical with or included in some other idea. If the former, they are "positively explicative;" if the latter, "negatively" so. "Ampliative" propositions are those which declare more than this. And it may be worth while to add, that various propositions rank technically under the former head which in common parlance would not be called so much as "explicative," but are mere truisms as "this apple is this apple," or "is an apple."

V. All positively explicative propositions are at once reducible to the principle of identity "A is A." Take *e.g.* as one example, "all hard substances resist pressure:" there is no *meaning* in this proposition, except that "all hard substances are hard;" or "all substances which resist pressure resist pressure."\*

VI. A second purely verbal explanation. "Self-evident" truths, in the present essay, are by no means the same thing with "primary" truths, but are only a particular *class* of them. All those truths are "primary," which are known to human beings *immediately*, and which need not to be inferred from other truths. But we call no truth "self-evident," unless it be cognized as certain by merely pondering the proposition which expresses it; by pene-

\* We may be allowed a moment's digression to repeat a remark made by us on a former occasion. We suggested that what have been called "the fundamental laws of thought," are but different exhibitions of the principle of identity. Thus, the principle of contradiction; "anything which is not—B is—not B," the principle of excluded middle, "anything which is—not B is not—B"



trating and comparing with each other the ideas respectively expressed by the proposition's subject and predicate. The fact that I was miserably cold a short time ago—if it be a fact—is to me a “primary” truth: nevertheless it is not a “self-evident” one, because it is known to me as certain, not by my pondering the proposition which expresses it, but by my consulting the attestation of my memory.\*

We should add, that these self-evident truths are called by scholastic writers “principles” and “axioms.” The latter term is of much philosophical service; but the word “principles” has in English so many different senses that we do not think it very well fitted to be a technical term. In our present discussion we must refrain from using even the word “axioms” in its scholastic sense, because Mr. Mill gives the name “axioms” to the first premisses of mathematical science, while *denying* that those premisses are self-evident. There is another expression, common in modern philosophy. Those truths are said to be “cognizable *a priori*,” which may be known independently of experience, whether they be self-evident or only *deducible* from self-evident premisses. Such truths are called in Catholic philosophy “metaphysically certain.”

VII. All self-evident truths are *necessary*. This follows at once from the theory of certitude. Take the proposition “every trilateral is triangular:” and let us *assume* for the moment that this proposition is self-evident; or in other words that it is known by me to be true, if I do but duly ponder it. But, as we urged in the earlier part of our essay, the declaration of my faculties infallibly corresponds with objective truth. Take therefore any trilateral which can exist in the universe—which can be formed

\* We are well aware that we did not in our former essays preserve this distinction of meaning between “primary” and “self-evident,” but we are of opinion that it will be found conducive to clearness of thought.

by Omnipotence itself—I know infallibly of this trilateral that it is triangular. It will be seen, then, by reverting to that very explanation of the word "necessary" which we gave at starting, that the triangularity of every trilateral—if it be a "self-evident"—must also be a "necessary" truth.

VIII. Mr. Mill nowhere, of course, dreams of denying that all *explicative* propositions are self-evident. And certainly—though he would doubtless wish to avoid the word "necessary"—we take for granted he would admit that the truth "A is A" must hold good in every possible sphere of existence.\* It is not therefore absolutely accurate to say that he denies the cognizableness of any necessary truth, but only of any necessary truth which is not purely explicative. At the same time, we most heartily concur with him in holding that these truths "A is A," "B is B," "C is C"—though they went through all the letters of a thousand alphabets—are utterly sterile, and cannot by any possible mutual combination germinate into an organic whole. There can be no syllogism without a middle term. Although, therefore, it may not be strictly true to say that Mr. Mill denies all necessary truth, he does deny the possibility of any necessary *science*, and denies also the cognizableness of any such necessary truths as we may call "fruitful."

IX. On the other hand, he holds as firmly as we do, that mathematical axioms are *ampliative* and not *explicative*: indeed, he would consider, as we do, that this fact is sufficiently proved by the very existence of mathematical science. Take our ordinary instance, "all trilaterals are triangular:" no one would dream of saying that the idea "triangular"

\* Yet we observe that even thus we take too much for granted. "Whether the three so-called fundamental laws," he says ("On Hamilton," p. 491)—and the principle of identity is one of these three—"are laws of our thoughts . . . merely because we perceive them to be universally true of all observed phenomena, I will not positively decide."

is identical with, or contained in, the idea "trilateral."\* And though some able writers have maintained that the axioms of *arithmetic* are purely explicative, this is not the place to oppose them; because Mr. Mill dissents from them as eagerly and as confidently as we do. We briefly referred to this question in our second essay.

We are thus at last brought to the point at issue between Mr. Mill and ourselves. He denies, whereas we affirm, that various ampliative propositions are self-evident and necessary. And we are now to join issue on mathematical axioms, as being special and critical instances of the general class "ampliative."

In general accordance with what has been expressed, we thus laid down in our second essay the immediate ground on which the discussion was to turn. "If in any case," we said, "I know by my very conception of some ens, that a certain attribute, not included in that conception, is truly predicable of that ens, such predication is a self-evident necessary proposition." These words defined with strict accuracy, as our readers will have seen, the *kind* of necessary truth of which Mr. Mill certainly denies the existence, though they are incidentally faulty in expression, as implying that *explicative* propositions are not *necessary*. Mr. Mill himself might admit, though in different phraseology, that explicative propositions are self-evident and necessary; and the controversy between him and ourselves turns on the question whether certain *ampliative* propositions are not self-evident and necessary also. Moreover, as has been seen, if they are self-evident, it follows that they are necessary.

Here, then, is the direct and central combat we have to

\* F. Kleutgen avowedly concurs with Kant's doctrine, on the cognizableness of "synthetical *a priori* propositions" as self-evident, differing only from him on the appropriateness of this particular word "synthetical." On this particular there is no difference of doctrine, but only of words, between other writers of the scholastic following and the philosopher of Königsberg.

fight out with Mr. Mill, and we beg our readers to concentrate on it their best attention. We take, as our pattern specimen, the judgment "all trilaterals are triangular." We maintain (1) that this judgment is ampliative: because (as is manifest) the idea "triangular" is neither identical with, nor contained in, the idea "trilateral." We maintain (2) that this judgment is self-evident: because its truth is known by duly pondering the proposition which expresses it; because, as soon as I have apprehended it, I need not go ever so little beyond the region of my own thoughts in order to cognize its truth. Mr. Mill's reply is substantially as follows; and we print his whole paragraph in a note, that our readers may judge for themselves whether we have misconceived him \* The *proposition* "all trilaterals are triangular"—so Mr. Mill answers in effect—is indubitably ampliative; because the idea expressed by the predicate is not identical with, nor contained in, that expressed by the subject. But the *judgment* expressed by the proposition is

\* "It is not denied nor deniable that there are properties of things which we know to be true (as Dr Ward expresses it) by our 'very conception' of the thing. But this is no argument against our knowing them solely by experience, for these are cases in which, in the very process of forming the conception, we have experience of the fact. It is not likely that Dr Ward has returned to the notion (so long abandoned and even forgotten by intuitionists) of ideas literally innate, and thinks that we bring into the world the conception of a trilateral figure ready made. He doubtless believes that it is at least suggested by observation of objects. Now, the fact of three sides and that of three angles are so intimately linked together in external nature, that it is impossible for the conception of a three-sided figure to get into the mind without carrying into the mind with it the conception of three angles. Therefore, when we have once got the conception of a trilateral, we have no need of further experience to prove triangularity. The conception itself, which represents all our previous experience, suffices. And if the association theory be true, it must follow from it that whenever any property of external things is in the relation to the things which is required for the formation of an inseparable association, that property will get into the conception, and be believed without further proof. Dr Ward will say that triangularity is not included in the conception of trilateral. But this is only true in the sense that triangularity is not in the connotation of the name. Many attributes, not included in the definition, are included in the conception. Dr Ward cannot but see that on the experience hypothesis, this not only may but must be the case." ("On Hamilton," p 337, note)

not ampliative at all, but explicative.\* Why? Because, in consequence of the singular uniformity of my past experience, I have come to include triangularity in my very idea of trilateralness; because, through this uniformity of experience, I have acquired an inability of *thinking* of a figure as trilateral without at the same moment (implicitly, at least) thinking of it as triangular. According to Mr. Mill, then, when an adult expresses the proposition that "all trilaterals are triangular," the judgment which he elicits would be *truly* analyzed and expressed by a different proposition; by the proposition, that "all figures which have three sides and three angles are triangular." But this proposition is of course purely explicative, and is admitted by Mr. Mill himself to be self-evident.

We are so very confident of our cause, that we earnestly desire to exhibit Mr. Mill's theory at its thoroughly best advantage. We will put it, therefore, this way. The proposition was once placed before me for the first time in a formulized shape (perhaps in some "object-lesson"), that "horses differ greatly from each other in colour." Though (by hypothesis) I have never before expressly contemplated that proposition in form, I at once recognize it as expressing a freshly familiar truth; a truth vividly known to me by every day's experience. Now, the very same thing took place—so Mr. Mill would say—when the proposition was first placed before me in a formulized shape, that "all trilaterals are triangular:" I recognize it at once, as expressing a freshly familiar truth, vividly known to me by

\* It may be asked how our ascription of this opinion to Mr. Mill is reconcilable with our recent statement, that he regards mathematical axioms as ampliative propositions. But the answer is most easy. According to him, my judgment that all trilaterals are triangular was ampliative when first I formed it, and indeed for a considerable time afterwards. He considers that it was first formed through my experience of external nature; and that it became more and more familiar and intensified by the same cause until at last (as explained in the text) it became part of my mind's habitual furniture and is easily mistaken for an intuition.

every day's experience. According to Mr. Mill, the triangularity of trilaterals is a truth as freshly known to me by daily experience as is the fact that horses are of different colours or that wood floats on water. Nay, according to Mr. Mill, the first-named truth is known to me with indefinitely *greater* freshness of familiarity than are the two latter. For consider: Mr. Mill admits that all mankind are under an incapacity of conceiving that even Omnipotence could form a non-triangular trilateral; whereas no one of cultivated mind has the slightest difficulty in conceiving that Omnipotence could make wood sink in the water, or could make all horses of the same colour. And it is Mr. Mill's precise allegation, that this contrast arises exclusively from the fact that experience is so very much more peremptorily uniform (if we may so express ourselves) in testifying the triangularity of trilaterals than in testifying the above-named properties of wood and of horses.\* Mr. Mill's contention, then, is as follows:—"The truth that all trilaterals are triangular, is known by every one with

\* "Dr Ward says that mere constant and uniform experience cannot possibly account for the mind's conviction of self-evident necessity. Nor do I pretend that it does. The experience must not only be constant and uniform, but the juxtaposition of the facts in experience must be immediate and close, as well as early, familiar, and so free from even the semblance of an exception that no counter association could possibly arise" ("On Hamilton," p 339, note) "Whether the" mathematical "axiom needs confirmation or not, it receives confirmation in almost every instant of our lives.

Experimental proof crowds in upon us in such endless profusion, and without one instance in which there can be even a suspicion of an exception to the rule, that we should soon have stronger ground for believing the axiom, even as an experimental truth, than we have for almost any of the general truths which we confessedly learn from the evidence of the senses. Independently of a *priori* evidence, we should certainly believe it with an intensity of conviction far greater than we accord to any ordinary physical truth . . . Where, then, is the necessity for assuming that our recognition of these truths has a different origin from the rest of our knowledge, when its existence is perfectly accounted for by supposing its origin to be the same? when the causes which produce belief in all other instances exist in this instance, and in a degree of strength as much superior to what exists in other cases as the intensity of the belief itself is superior?" ("Logic," vol 1. p 267)

indefinitely greater freshness of familiarity than the truth that wood floats upon water." This is what he affirms, and what we deny, and it is precisely on this point that issue is joined.

As politicians would say, we cannot desire a better issue than this to go the country upon. We affirm as an indubitable matter of fact, that Mr. Mill is here contradicted by the most obvious experience. We affirm as an indubitable matter of fact, that ninety-nine hundredths of mankind not only do not know the triangularity of trilaterals with this extraordinary freshness of familiarity, but do not know it *at all*. Those who have not studied the elements of geometry—with hardly an exception—if they were told that trilaterals are triangular, and if they understood the statement, would as simply receive a new piece of information as they did when they were first told the death of Napoleon III. Then, as to those who are beginning the study of mathematics. A youth of fifteen, we said in our second essay, is beginning to learn geometry, and his tutor points out to him that every trilateral is triangular. Does he naturally reply—as he *would* if his tutor were telling him that *horses are of different colours*—"of course the fact is so, I have observed it a thousand times"? On the contrary, in all probability the proposition will be entirely new to him; and yet, notwithstanding its novelty, will at once commend itself as a self-evident truth.\* Lastly, take those who learned the elements of geometry when they were young, and are now busily engaged in

\* Mr Mill does not directly reply to this allegation of ours. Nor does he notice Mr Mahaffy's testimony, quoted by us in the note "A mathematical friend," says the latter, "told me he perfectly well remembered, when a boy, being taught, without understanding it, the axiom, that two straight lines cannot enclose a space. When the fourth proposition of Euclid was shown to him, he remembers the universality and necessity of the axiom at once flashing on him."

political, or forensic, or commercial life. If the triangularity of trilaterals were mentioned to them, they would remember, doubtless, that they had been taught in their youth to see the self-evidence of this truth, but they would also remember, that for years and years it had been absent from their thoughts. Is it seriously Mr. Mill would allege, that they know the triangularity of trilaterals with the same freshness of familiar experience (or rather with indefinitely *greater* freshness of familiar experience) with which they know the tendency of fire to burn and of water to quench it? or with which they respectively know the political events of the moment, or the practice of the courts, or the habits of the Stock Exchange? If he did allege this in his zeal for a theory, we should confidently appeal against so eccentric a statement to the common sense and common experience of mankind.

But is it not, then, Mr. Mill might ask, a matter to every man of every-day experience, that trilaterals are triangular? If by "every-day experience" he means "every day *observation*"—and his argument requires this,—we answer confidently in the negative. Even if we could not lay our finger on the precise fallacy which has misled Mr. Mill, it would be none the less certain that he has *been* misled. It cannot possibly be true that the triangularity of trilaterals is a matter to every man of every-day observation, because (as we said just now) patently and undeniably the mass of men know nothing whatever *about* it. But Mr. Mill's fallacy is obvious enough to those who will look at facts as they really are. In the first place—putting aside that very small minority who are predominantly occupied with mathematical studies—the very notion of a "trilateral" does not occur to men at all, except accidentally and on rare occasions. It is not because my eyes light by chance on three straws mutually intersecting, or on some other natural object calculated to suggest a trilateral, that



therefore any thought of that figure, either explicitly or implicitly, enters my mind. I am probably musing on matters indefinitely more interesting and exciting; the prospects of the coming parliamentary division, or the point of law which I am going down to argue, or the symptoms of the patient whom I am on my way to visit, or the probable fluctuation of the funds. The keen geometrician may see trilaterals in stocks and stones, and think of trilaterals on the slightest provocation: but what proportion of the human race are keen geometricians?

Then, secondly—still excluding these exceptional geometricians—for a hundred times that observation might suggest to me the thought of a trilateral, not more than *once* perhaps will it suggest to me the *triangularity* of such trilateral. Mr. Mill himself will admit, we suppose, that such *explicit* observation is comparatively rare, but he will urge, probably, that I *implicitly* observe the triangularity of every trilateral which I remark. We will make, then, a very simple supposition, for the purpose of testing this suggestion, as well as for one or two other purposes connected with our argument. We will suppose that all *rose stalks* within the reach of human observation *had leaves of the same shape with each other*. On such supposition, the shape of its stalk-leaves would be a more obvious and obtrusive attribute of the rose than is triangularity of the trilateral, and yet, beyond all possibility of doubt, one might very frequently observe a rose, without even implicitly noticing the shape of its stalk-leaves. The present writer can testify this at first-hand. In a life of sixty odd years, he has often enough smelt roses and handled their stalks, and yet he had not the slightest notion whether their leaves are or are not similarly shaped, until he asked the question for the very purpose of this illustration. And it is plain that if he has not observed the mutual dissimilarity of their leaves, neither would he have observed their similarity did it exist. Now, we appeal to

our readers' common sense, whether what we said at starting is not undeniably true; viz. that every ordinary person is very far more likely to observe the shape of rose-stalk leaves, than to observe the number of angles formed by the sides of a trilateral.

At the same time, we fully admit that many a man may have *implicitly* observed the similarity of shape in rose-stalk leaves (supposing such similarity to exist) without having explicitly adverted to the fact until he heard it mentioned, and in like manner this or that man may have implicitly observed the triangularity of various trilaterals. But such a circumstance does but give occasion to *another* disproof of Mr. Mill's theory. Suppose I have implicitly observed the former phenomenon. I hear the proposition stated, that the shape of all rose-stalk leaves is similar, and I set myself to test its truth by my former experience. I consult my confused remembrance of numerous instances in which I have looked at rose-stalks, and I come to assert, with more or less positiveness, that all those within my observation have had similar leaves. On the other hand, I wish, let us suppose, to test the proposition that all trilaterals are triangular. If Mr. Mill's theory were true, I should proceed as in the foregoing instance, I should contemplate my confused remembrance of numerous instances in which I have observed the triangularity. But the fact is most different from this. I do not consult *at all* my memory of past experience, but give myself to the contemplation of some imaginary trilateral, which I have summoned into my thoughts. And the impression which I receive from such contemplation is not at all that the various trilaterals *I have observed in times past* are triangular, but that *in no possible world could non-triangular trilaterals exist*. Observe, then, these two respective cases. *My process of reason has been fundamentally different in the two, and the impression which I receive from that process will have been funda-*

mentally different in the two : consequently the two cases are fundamentally different, instead of being (as they would be on Mr. Mill's theory) entirely similar.

Our readers will observe that we have just now twice used the word "impression," instead of such more definite terms as "cognition" or "intuition." Our reason for this is easily given. By the admission of Mr. Mill himself, every adult who gives his mind to the careful thought of trilaterals, receives the *impression* that their triangularity is a necessary truth : but Mr. Mill denies that this impression is a genuine intuition, and we could not of course *assume* what Mr. Mill denies.

Here we bring to a close the exhibition of our first argument against Mr. Mill ; an argument which we must maintain to be simply final and conclusive, even if no second were adducible. According to his theory, the triangularity of trilaterals (or any other geometrical axiom) is a phenomenon known to all men with as great freshness of familiarity as the phenomenon that fire burns, or that water quenches it ; or rather, the former class of phenomena is known to all men with incomparably *greater* freshness of familiarity than the latter. But such a proposition is undeniably inconsistent with the most patent and indubitable facts. This circumstance would of course be fatal to Mr. Mill, even though we were entirely unable to account for it psychologically ; but (as we have further argued) it can be psychologically accounted for with the greatest possible ease.

A second argument has been incidentally included in our exposition of the first. The mental process, whereby I come to cognize the truth of a geometrical axiom, is fundamentally different from the mental process, whereby I come to recognize the truth of an experienced fact ; whereas, on Mr. Mill's theory, these two processes would be simply identical.

There is a third and perfectly distinct line of argument, which has been urged with great cogency by modern necessists against the phenomenistic school. We have hitherto been advocating the necessary character of geometrical axioms, as an *inferential* truth; and this is the line (we think) most in harmony with the ordinary language of Catholic philosophers. But non-Catholic necessists have powerfully advocated the same truth, as one *immediately* declared by the human faculties. Let us revert to our specimen instance. We have hitherto contemplated the proposition, that "all trilaterals are triangular." we have argued that the proposition is undeniably *self-evident*, and from this we have *inferred* that it is also *necessary*. But we will now contemplate a different proposition; viz. that "the triangularity of trilaterals is a necessary truth." We maintain, in accordance with many modern philosophers, that this proposition is *immediately* declared by the human faculties; that it is self-evident, that it is recognized as true by a mere pondering of its sense and comparison of its terms. Mr Mill himself admits that the declaration of the human faculties is *primâ facie* in our favour, while we on our side allege that profounder self-inspection does but corroborate and intensify men's *primâ facie* impression. We think, indeed, that in no way will the truth of our allegation be more effectively forced on the inquirer's conviction than by his considering (as we shall now proceed to do) Mr. Mill's attempted refutation thereof. He lays very great stress on this alleged refutation, and says that the principle on which it rests is one which intuitionists ought to have specially considered, "because it is the basis of the" phenomenistic "theory." ("On Hamilton," p. 314.) We can only reply, that the phenomenistic theory in that case rests on a basis of extraordinary frailty.

Mr. Mill distinctly admits that, when the human mind contemplates mathematical axioms, there arises in it a

certain "conviction of self-evident necessity:" but he considers that this conviction can be satisfactorily explained, without accounting it a genuine intuition. These are his words in reply to ourselves:

Dr. Ward says that mere uniform and constant experience cannot possibly account for the mind's conviction of self-evident necessity. Nor do I pretend that it does. The experience must not only be constant and uniform, but the juxtaposition of the facts in experience must be immediate and close, as well as early, familiar, and so free from even the semblance of an exception, that no counter-association can possibly arise. ("On Hamilton," p, 339)

Now, we must admit at once that this reply is no after-thought of Mr. Mill's, but that, on the contrary, he had repeatedly made the same statement on earlier occasions; and, indeed, in one passage which we actually quoted (pp. 44, 45). We must admit, therefore, that in our second essay we did not sufficiently bear in mind Mr. Mill's previous explanation; and we must accordingly withdraw a reply to him, which we pressed with some confidence, but which he has shown in his rejoinder to labour under this fault. This, however, of course by the way, as it does not affect the merits of Mr. Mill's argument itself. That argument, it will be seen, runs thus. That "conviction," he says, "of self-evident necessity," which I receive when I contemplate a geometrical axiom, cannot be shown to be a genuine intuition, because it may be accounted for in quite a different way. In *what* way? we ask. He replies by the following syllogism.

Major. "If there be a phenomenon so circumstanced, that not only my experience of it is constant and uniform, but the juxtaposition of facts in experience is immediate and close, and so free from even the persistent\* semblance of an exception that no counter-association can possibly

\* Our reason for inserting the word "persistent" will presently appear

arise—an impression will inevitably be made on my mind, that this phenomenon is a self-evidently necessary truth."

Minor. "But the triangularity of trilaterals, or any other geometrical axiom, is a phenomenon thus circumstanced."

The consequent is obvious.

Now, plainly Mr. Mill would do nothing for his cause, if we could successfully deny *either* of his premisses; but it so happens that we confidently deny *both*. We will begin with the minor, which is expressed somewhat more clearly and emphatically a few pages earlier. A geometrical axiom, he says (p. 334), (1) is "founded on an experience beginning from birth, and never for many minutes intermitted in our waking hours:" while on the other hand (2) no counter-association is ever formed, because "experience affords" no "case of persistent illusion" in which such axiom has even the semblance of being contradicted. We have said that we deny both Mr. Mill's major and his minor; and we now add, that we deny also *both* the statements contained in his minor.

We deny them altogether (1) that a geometrical axiom is "founded on an experience never for many minutes intermitted in our waking hours." On the contrary, as regards the mass of mankind, we affirm (and have already given ample reasons for our affirmation) that the triangularity of trilaterals has never been to them a matter of observation *at all*. Of course a necessist will be the last to deny that men's experience of such triangularity has been "constant and uniform" in *this* sense, that they have never once experienced any phenomenon *inconsistent* therewith: but such an admission gives no help whatever to Mr. Mill's reasoning.

Then, (2) what does Mr. Mill mean, when he further says that experience affords no case of persistent illusion in which any geometrical axiom has even the semblance of being contradicted? That there are "illusions" of the

kind he expressly admits, though denying that such illusions are "persistent;" for he proceeds at once to mention one himself. "In the case of parallel lines," he says, "the laws of perspective do present such an illusion: they do to the eye appear to meet in both directions, and consequently to *inclose a space*." Mr Mahaffy had given another instance, viz. a straight stick, appearing bent in the water, and presenting thereby an illusion contradictory to the axiom, that a straight line is the shortest way between two points. But Mr. Mill replies, that these are not "persistent" illusions; and explains himself to mean (p. 335, note) that their "illusory character is at once seen, from the immediate accessibility of the evidence which disproves them." Observe what is involved in this.

There are two different classes of truths, which we may be allowed for the present purpose to call geometrical and physical axioms respectively; \* both of which Mr. Mill regards as unknown except through experience. He admits, however, that the former class produce on the mind an inevitable *impression* of their being necessary, while the latter produce no such impression at all. We ask him to explain how this difference arises, if both classes really rest on the same kind of evidence. He replies firstly, that geometrical axioms are known by far more unintermittent observation than physical; and on this part of his answer we have already rejoined. He replies secondly, that no persistent illusions befall me in which geometrical axioms have even the semblance of being contradicted; whereas in the case of all physical axioms I *am* exposed to such illusions. In other words, according to Mr. Mill, I am from time to time under an illusion, that fire does not burn, nor stones sink in the water—without any "evidence" being "immediately accessible" to me which would correct

\* We here are for the moment using the word "axioms" in the inaccurate sense of "obvious and elementary truths"

such illusion. Mr. Mill, we are sure, cannot have soberly intended this; yet, unless he intended it, his elaborate argumentative structure is in rums.\*

We deny, then, the second proposition of his minor no less peremptorily than we deny the first. We deny that men's experience of geometrical axioms is exempt from liability to illusion, in any sense which can assist Mr. Mill's argument.

Before proceeding to Mr. Mill's major, let us revert for a moment to our old instance, the impression which he admits to be inevitably made on my mind, that the triangularity of trilaterals is a necessary truth. Does he mean that this is merely a *superficial* impression? that my faculties, if carefully and accurately consulted, declare such impression to be unfounded? Or does he fall back on his theory of *primordial* certitude, and give up the testimony of men's *existing* faculties altogether? If the latter be his meaning, of course we can only refer to what we urged in the earlier part of this essay. It is impossible to know that my faculties, when I was a baby in arms, would have

\* After the substance of this article had been completed, we came for the first time across a work on Kant by Mr Mahaffy, from whose earlier volume we gave an extract in our second essay. Had we met with it sooner we should have made much use of it, as it travels over many parts of the same ground which we have ourselves trodden. We give an extract bearing on what is said in the text —

Mr Mill "had said 'had but experience afforded a case of illusion' in which" mathematical "truths appeared to be reversed, the counter association might have been sufficient to disprove the supposed necessity of thought. In other words, had we but the least starting-point to help our imagination in doing it, we would have conceived the reverse of  $2 + 2 = 4$ , or of a straight line being the shortest between two points. This statement I took up, and showed that in our every day life there were such things as double vision of an object single to the touch, and a straight stick appearing bent in the water. I argued that on Mr Mill's showing, these natural objects should have been sufficient to defeat "the supposed necessity, "and that still they were not so. I did not mean to maintain [as Mr Mill's answer implies] that mankind had reason to believe that  $1 = 2$ , or that a bent line was the shortest way between two points, but merely that, on Mr Mill's own showing, we had a sufficient amount of experience to enable us to conceive it" (Kant's "Critical Philosophy," pp 157, 158).



declared the necessity of a geometrical axiom ; just as it is impossible to know that they would have faithfully represented to me my experience of one hour back. If Mr. Mill is prepared on that account to disbelieve the distinctest declarations of his memory, he will doubtless be consistent in disbelieving, on the same ground, the necessity of geometrical axioms. But as Mr. Mill always takes the trustworthiness of memory for granted, an appeal from him to men's *primordial* faculties as their rule of certitude is the most glaring of inconsistencies.

We are anxious, however, throughout—so confident we are of our cause—to exhibit Mr. Mill's position at its greatest possible advantage. and we will take for granted, therefore, that his appeal is to men's *existing* faculties. His major premiss, then, will be the following :—“ Let there be a phenomenon so circumstanced that not only my experience of it is constant and uniform, but the juxtaposition of facts in experience immediate and close, and so free from the persistent semblance of an exception that no counter-association can possibly arise. In such case (1) a superficial impression will inevitably be made on my mind that this phenomenon is a self-evidently necessary truth ; but (2) my faculties, if carefully and accurately consulted, will declare such impression to be unfounded. Mr. Mill's major, then, like his minor, contains two separate statements ; and in the case of his major, moreover, just as in the case of his minor, we entirely deny them *both*.

The first of these statements, however, is so comparatively unimportant that a very few words will suffice for its examination. Mr. Mill alleges a supposed psychological fact, viz. that certain conditions generate in the human mind an inevitable *primâ facie* impression that certain propositions are necessary. What *evidence* does he adduce of this supposed fact ? Absolutely none. He may say, perhaps, that conclusive proof is impossible from the nature

of the case; that he does not even pretend that his conditions apply, except to propositions which *his opponents* regard as *really* necessary. But at least he might have applied something like what he calls "the method of concomitant variation;" he might have shown that in proportion as there is a nearer *approach* to the fulfilment of his conditions, in that proportion there is a nearer *approach* to the generation of this superficial impression. But the fact is indubitably otherwise. All men have unceasing experience of certain very obvious physical phenomena; yet no one has the faintest appreciable *tendency* towards doubting that Omnipotence could make fire innocuous, could make wood sink in the water, or could make stones float thereon.

But at last the question is one of fact, not theory; and its gist lies in the *second* of the two statements which we have included in Mr Mill's major. The question, in fact, is simply this: what *do* the human faculties declare concerning geometrical axioms? We have always readily conceded to Mr. Mill, that a man's self-inspection is often very defective, and that he will again and again carelessly ascribe to his faculties some avouchment which is not really theirs. As to this, however, there is one, and only one, reasonable appeal; viz. from a *superficial* to a *profounder* examination of the human consciousness. Let as many competent inquirers as possible devote themselves to this examination; let them, by painstaking introspection, ponder on the true nature of their mind's avouchment, when they contemplate the triangularity of a trilateral. Is that avouchment such as the following:—"I have never met with nor heard of a non-triangular trilateral?" Or is it rather: "A non-triangular trilateral is an intrinsically impossible chimera, which Omnipotence itself could not fashion?" There are several arguments, we consider, any one of which may with entire conclusiveness be directed

against Mr. Mill's theory: yet we could be content (were it requisite) to abandon them all, and to rest our whole case on the issue we have just raised.

In fact, Mr. Mill's silence on this matter is the most emphatic controversial support which can well be imagined. It is impossible to obtain from him a categorical statement, that the existing faculties of an adult declare the "contingent" \* character of mathematical axioms. We say, with some confidence, that no such statement is to be found in any of his writings, and that just where we should most expect such a statement, he seems to check himself in full career, and fall back on his amazing theory of *primordial* certitude. In saying, then, most confidently that the human faculties declare the necessary character of geometrical axioms, we do but say what Mr. Mill himself nowhere ventures expressly to deny.

So far we have been considering Mr. Mill's *negative* thesis, viz. that mathematical axioms are not cognizable as necessary truths. But his *positive* thesis is not so easily intelligible. No one (we believe) was ever more anxious than Mr. Mill to treat his opponents with perfect fairness; but, *in fact*, he has altogether failed to treat them fairly in this particular matter, because he has kept so much in the background his own actual theory, on the degree of certitude possessed by these axioms, and on the grounds which he considers sufficient to *establish* that certitude. He declares, indeed, again and again, that their universal truth is amply proved by uniform experience, but we find it most difficult to understand what he means by this allegation. Reverting to an earlier example, let us suppose that all rose-stalks, known as within human experience, have been observed to possess leaves similar in shape, what conclusion should

\* By "contingent," we need hardly say, is simply meant the contradictory of "necessary"

I have a right to draw from this circumstance? I could not know that even in Dorsetshire or Hampshire, some fresh method of planting or sowing might not be found to produce indubitable roses, growing on stalks totally different in shape from those hitherto experienced; and I could not even guess that, in some newly-discovered country, such rose-trees should not be found abundant. In like manner we do not see how Mr. Mill could reasonably even guess but that, in some newly-discovered country, a tree may be found the wood of which shall possess the capability of being formed into quadrangular trilaterals. He says, indeed, that the truth of mathematical axioms "pervades all nature;" but how can he reasonably even *guess* that this is the case? What stronger reason can he possibly have for his opinion that trilaterals are everywhere triangular, than his ancestors had for *their* opinion that all swans are white, and that all metals sink in the water? \*

Here, however, as in several other instances, Mr. Mill has shown himself too clear-sighted to be quite satisfied with his own position; and he takes refuge in a thinly-disguised reproduction of that very necessist theory, which he so energetically repudiates. This fact is so very curious and characteristic, that we beg our readers to give it special attention.

"That a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, we do not doubt to be true," says Mr. Mill, "even in the region of the fixed stars." ("Logic," vol. i. pp. 362-363.) What right has Mr. Mill, we asked, to hold this truth without doubt? He regards this axiom as merely a fact known by experience. But "in distant parts of the stellar regions," he affirms (vol. ii. p. 108), "where pheno-

\* "That all metals sink in water was a uniform experience, from the origin of the human race to the discovery of potassium in the present century by Sir Humphry Davy. That all swans are white was a uniform experience down to the discovery of Australia" (Mill's "Logic," vol. i. p. 305)

mena may be entirely unlike those with which we are acquainted, it would be folly to affirm confidently that "those laws prevail "which we have found to hold universally on our own planet." In our second essay we asked him distinctly how he could reconcile these two statements; how he could regard a certain property of stellar straight lines as a truth known by experience, while he admitted that the stellar region is beyond the *reach* of experience. Mr. Mills tacitly replies by correcting the earlier sentence. "That a straight line is the shortest distance between two points we do not doubt," he had said, "to be true, even in the region of the fixed stars." But now he adds in a note a qualification. "In strictness, *wherever the present constitution of space exists*, which we have ample reason to believe that it does in the region of the fixed stars." In the new note of his work on Hamilton, written with avowed reference to our criticism, he expresses the same theory more fully. We italicize a few words.

*Only if space itself is everywhere what we conceive it to be, can our conclusions from the conception be everywhere objectively true. The truths of geometry are valid, wherever the constitution of space agrees with what is within our means of observation. That space cannot anywhere be differently constituted, or that Almighty power could not make a different constitution of it, we know not (p. 338, note).*

Here is a most undeniable ampliative proposition: viz. "wherever the present constitution of space exists, a straight line is always the shortest distance between two points." Yet Mr. Mill admits that this ampliative proposition is cognizable, independently of experience, as a "conclusion from the conception" of space. It is really difficult to imagine a more explicit surrender of the whole point at issue between him and ourselves.

Or we may express the same self-contradiction of Mr. Mill's in a somewhat different shape. It is impossible,

Mr. Mill confesses, to know by *experience* that in the stellar region *trilaterals* are triangular, because in that region "phenomena may be totally unlike those with which we are acquainted:" yet, according to him, I may confidently "conclude" their triangularity from my "conception" of stellar "space." In like manner, therefore, as to *earthly trilaterals*. I need not resort to experience for my knowledge of their triangularity, but I may "conclude" that attribute from my very "conception" of earthly "space." This is the very proposition which hitherto *we* have been engaged in affirming and he in denying.

Here we close our direct and central conflict with Mr. Mill. We have confined our attention to *geometrical axioms*, and, indeed, almost exclusively to *one* such axiom, because the more closely the issue can be narrowed, the greater hope there is of arriving at a definite decision. Nor is there any inconvenience in such a course. because (1) it is very easy for inquirers to apply to other mathematical axioms what has been said of one; and because (2) if there were so much as one *amphative judgment* which Mr. Mill admitted to be necessary, by that very admission he would be a refugee from the *phenomenistic* to the *necessist* camp.

On *arithmetical axioms* in particular, we will content ourselves with placing on record the point at issue. We gave, as our specimen instance, the axiom " $2 + 9 = 3 + 8$ ;" and Mr. Mill replies to us, in the new edition of his work on Hamilton, at p. 339. While we confidently maintain against Mr. Mill that the axiom is self-evident, we nevertheless entirely agree with him that it is deducible from one still simpler; from the axiom that "change of arrangement makes no difference in the number of objects."\* We heartily agree with him, that this latter judgment is

\* Mr. Mill says inadvertently, "change of position;" but we need hardly point out that arithmetical axioms apply to succession in time, or indeed to any other aggregation, no less than to position in place.

ampliative, and not merely explicative. On the other hand, whereas he alleges that man's knowledge of it is derived only from *experience*, we maintain, on the contrary, that the axiom is not merely self-evident, but among the most superficially obvious of self-evident truths. After the discussion of the previous pages, we need not trouble our readers with arguments on this head.

One or two subordinate points were incidentally raised in our second essay, and it will be more satisfactory not to pass entirely over Mr. Mill's replies on those issues. At the same time, our notice of those replies must necessarily be very brief; and we may mention to our readers for their relief, that they can pass over what follows without losing any essential part of our argument.

(1) Mr. Mill had argued as follows :—

Many persons who have been frightened in childhood can never be alone in the dark without irrepressible terrors. Many a person is unable to revisit a particular place, or to think of a particular event, without recalling acute feelings of grief or reminiscences of suffering. If the facts which created these strong associations in individual minds had been common to all mankind from their earliest infancy, and had, when the associations were fully formed, been forgotten, we should have had a necessity of thought, one of those necessities which are supposed to prove an objective law, and an *a priori* mental connection between ideas.

We replied to this that a mere necessity of *feeling* has never been affirmed to prove "an *a priori* connection between two ideas." Mr. Mill, however, thus rejoins ("On Hamilton," p. 329, note) :

If the person in whose mind a given spot is associated with terrors, had entirely forgotten the fact by which it came to be so, and if the rest of mankind, or even only a great number of them, felt the same terror on coming to the same place, and were equally unable to account for it,—there would certainly grow up a conviction that the place had a natural quality of

terribleness, which would probably fix itself in the belief that the place was under a curse, or was the abode of some invisible object of terror.

Of course we entirely deny this. We would ask any disciple of Mr. Mill this simple question. Let us suppose that Mr. Mill's conditions were fulfilled: we ask, *what* is that particular ampliative judgment which, on that supposition, men would suppose themselves to cognize as self-evident? Mr. Mill avowedly cannot answer this question. They *might* think it self-evident, he says, that the place was under a curse, or they *might* think it self-evident that the place was the abode of some terrific object; but it is not (according to him) more than *probable* that they would think it either the one or the other.

(2) We further objected that Mr. Mill had used the words "necessity of thought" in two different senses: a "law of nature whereby I *necessarily think*;" and "a law of nature whereby I *think as necessary*." Mr. Mill replies ("On Hamilton," p. 339) that the *only evidence* which can be given for my thinking a thing as necessary, is my necessarily thinking it. But we had adduced evidence of a totally different character. Mr. Mill proceeds indeed to say, that he has *refuted* our arguments for this different kind of evidence; but our preceding pages have, we trust, sufficiently shown that his alleged refutation is invalid.

(3) Mr. Mill admits that men possess the power of cognizing mathematical axioms by means of purely mental experience. He accounts for this power by "one of the characteristic properties of geometrical forms," viz. "that they can be painted in the imagination with a distinctness equal to the reality." We urged against him that, in thus speaking, he entirely leaves out of account arithmetical and algebraic axioms; though these, equally with geometrical, can be arrived at by purely mental experimentation. He replies ("On Hamilton," p. 340) as follows:—



I do not leave them out of account, but have assigned in my *Logic* another and equally conclusive reason why they can be studied in our conception alone, namely, that arithmetical and algebraic axioms, being true not of any particular kind of thing but of all things whatever, any mental conceptions whatever will adequately represent them

We fully admit that in his "*Logic*" (vol. i. pp. 298-295) Mr. Mill sets forth the true doctrine, that arithmetical axioms hold good, not of any particular kind of thing, but of all things whatever. But we cannot for the life of us see that he anywhere assigns this doctrine as a "reason why they can be studied" and known to be true, by men's "conception alone" On the contrary, as it seems to us, he distinctly denies that they *can* be so studied. These are his words: "All who wish to carry the child's mind with them in teaching arithmetic, all who wish to teach numbers and not mere ciphers, now teach it *through the evidence of the senses*" (p. 296).

(4) There remains to be reconsidered, a reply we gave to an argument which Mr. Mill had based on Reid's "*Geometry of Visibles*." It would carry us much too far, if we attempted to make our present rejoinder understood by those who do not clearly bear in mind our earlier remarks. We will here, therefore, presuppose them.

Mr. Mill ("On Hamilton," p. 92, note) does not attempt, on his own account, any further discussion on the point; but contents himself with maintaining that Reid was of the same mind with Mr. Mill himself, and with referring us to Reid's own arguments. We are still perfectly confident that it is Mr. Mill who is opposing Reid. It is certainly not very probable that Reid can have intended to argue against the necessary character of mathematical axioms, considering that he habitually and earnestly *upheld* their necessary character. And there is one sentence of his which will put the matter beyond dispute.

Reid conceived certain imaginary "Idomenians," who agree with human beings in every other particular, but who possess the sense of sight without any accompanying sense of touch. The Idomenians, he says, would regard as self-evident certain strange geometrical propositions; as, *e.g.*, that "every straight line, being sufficiently produced, will re-enter into itself." The question between Mr. Mill and ourselves is this: whether in such an opinion they would be (according to Reid) referring to that figure which *human beings* call a straight line, or, on the contrary, to some totally different figure (*viz.* the arc of a great circle), which they will have learned to call by the *name* of a straight line. Mr. Mill maintains the former alternative, and we the latter. Now let our readers observe Reid's own words, especially those which we italicize —

This small specimen of the geometry of visibles is intended . . . to demonstrate the truth of what we have affirmed above; namely, that those figures and that extension which are the immediate objects of sight [and which, therefore, are those contemplated by the Idomenians] are *not* the figures and the extension about which common geometry is employed. (Hamilton's edition, p 148.)

Surely this is final and decisive.

Our second essay, however, was not exclusively devoted to the discussion of mathematical axioms, but contained in its later part various general considerations, which tell importantly (as we think) against the doctrine of phenomenism. There are only two of these which it has naturally fallen in Mr. Mill's way to answer; and on one of the two—relating to the faculty of memory—we have rejoined in the early part of this essay. The remaining one concerns the very foundation of phenomenism. The whole body of doctrine accumulated by a phenomenist depends throughout on his premiss, that "the laws of nature are uniform." Let this premiss be successfully denied, and straightway

there is no phenomenistic philosophy. We allege that phenomenists can adduce no grounds whatever, which will reasonably be accounted sufficient to establish their fundamental premiss; and we criticized in that sense Mr. Mill's arguments for the desired conclusion. In the new edition of his *Logic*, Mr. Mill replies to our criticism (vol. II. pp. 109-111); though we think few readers will fail to see how unsatisfactory is his self-defence. The question, however, is one of such fundamental importance in the conflict with phenomenism, that no merely perfunctory treatment of it is permissible. In our next essay on Mr. Mill, then, we hope to elucidate the matter in more detail.

One or two other questions, more or less cognate, are in our mind, which we trust also to include in our next paper. And so much having been accomplished, we have every hope of continuing in subsequent papers without further interruption—and still with Mr. Mill as our representative opponent—the course of argument which we originally projected against that poison of antitheism, which just now so widely and so profoundly infects all the higher speculations of non-Catholic Europe.

## V.

### MR. MILL'S PHILOSOPHICAL POSITION.\*

It is impossible to pursue our controversy with Mr. Mill without some preliminary notice of the very remarkable autobiography which has appeared in this last quarter. We will not ourselves, however, make any comment on Mr. Mill's personal qualities as therein exhibited: because (1) our argument concerns his philosophy, not himself; and because (2) any attempt at subtle appreciation of character is wholly beyond the present writer's power of thought and expression. We will supply our omission, however, as best we can, by placing before our readers large part of a very able criticism which appeared in the *Spectator* and with which on the whole we concur:—

That this curious volume delineates, on the whole, a man marked by the most earnest devotion to human good, and the widest intellectual sympathies, no one who reads it with any discernment can doubt. But it is both a very melancholy book to read, and one full of moral paradoxes. It is very sad, in the first instance, to read the story of the over-tutored boy, constantly incurring his father's displeasure for not being able to do what by no possibility he could have done, and apparently without any one to love. Mr. James Mill, vivacious talker, and

\* *Autobiography* By JOHN STUART MILL. London: Longmans.

*An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy* By JOHN STUART MILL. Fourth Edition. London: Longmans.

*A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive.* By JOHN STUART MILL. Eighth Edition. London: Longmans.

in a narrow way powerful thinker as he was, was evidently as an educator, on his son's own showing, a hard master, anxious to reap what he had not sown, and to gather what he had not strewed, or, as that son himself puts it, expecting "effects without causes." Not that the father did not teach the child with all his might, and teach in many respects well, but then he taught the boy far too much, and expected him to learn besides a great deal that he neither taught him nor showed him where to find. The child began Greek at three years old, read a good deal of Plato at seven, . . . began logic at twelve, went through a "complete course of political economy" at thirteen, including the most intricate points of the theory of currency. He was a constant writer for the "*Westminster Review*" at eighteen, was editing Bentham's "*Theory of Evidence*" and writing habitual criticisms of the Parliamentary debates at nineteen. At twenty he fell into a profound melancholy, on discovering that the only objects of life for which he lived—the objects of social and political reformers—would, if suddenly and completely granted, give him no happiness whatever. Such a childhood and youth, lived apparently without a single strong affection—for his relation to his father was one of deep respect and fear, rather than love, and he tells us frankly, in describing the melancholy to which we have alluded, that if he had loved any one well enough to confide to him, the melancholy would not have been—and resulting at the age of eighteen in the production of what Mr Mill himself says might, with as little extravagance as would ever be involved in the application of such a phrase to a human being, be called "a mere reasoning machine,"—are not pleasant subjects of contemplation even though it be true, as Mr Mill asserts, that the over-supply of study and under-supply of love did not prevent his childhood from being a happy one. Nor are the other personal incidents of the autobiography of a different cast. Nothing is more remarkable than the fewness, limited character, and apparently, so far as close intercourse was concerned, temporary duration, of most of Mr Mill's friendships. The one close and intimate friendship of his life, which made up to him for the insufficiency of all others, that with the married lady who, after the death of her husband, became his wife, was one which for a long time subjected him to slanders, the pain of which his sensitive nature evidently felt very keenly. And yet he must have been aware that though in his own conduct he had kept free from all stain,

his example was an exceedingly dangerous and mischievous one for others, who might be tempted by his moral authority to follow in a track in which they would not have had the strength to tread. Add to this that his married life was very brief, only seven years and a half, being unexpectedly cut short, and that his passionate reverence for his wife's memory and genius—in his own words, "a religion"—was one which, as he must have been perfectly sensible, he could not possibly make to appear otherwise than extravagant, not to say an hallucination, in the eyes of the rest of mankind, and yet that he was possessed by an irresistible yearning to attempt to embody it in all the tender and enthusiastic hyperbole of which it is so pathetic to find a man who gained his fame by his "dry-light" a master,—and it is impossible not to feel that the human incidents in Mr. Mill's career are very sad. True, his short service in Parliament, when he was already advanced in years, was one to bring him much intellectual consideration and a certain amount of popularity. But even that terminated in a defeat, and was hardly successful enough to repay him for the loss of literary productiveness which those three years of practical drudgery imposed. In spite of the evident satisfaction and pride with which Mr. Mill saw that his school of philosophy had gained rapid ground since the publication of his "*Logic*," and that his large and liberal view of the science of political economy had made still more rapid way amongst all classes, the record of his life which he leaves behind him is not, even in its own tone, and still less in the effect produced on the reader, a bright and happy one. It is "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," and of thought that has to do duty for much, both of feeling and of action, which usually goes to constitute the full life of a large mind.

And besides the sense of sadness which the human incidents of the autobiography produce, the intellectual and moral story itself is full of paradox which weighs upon the heart as well as the mind. Mr. Mill was brought up by his father to believe that Christianity was false, and that even as regards natural religion there was no ground for faith.\* But in the mean time, he is most anxious to point out that religion, in what he thinks the best sense, is possible even to one who does not believe in God. That best sense is the sense in which religion stands for

\* This is certainly an under-statement, as we shall show presently in the text.

an ideal conception of a perfect Being to which those who have such a conception "habitually refer as the guide of their conscience:" an ideal, he says, "far nearer to perfection than the objective Deity of those who think themselves obliged to find absolute goodness in the author of a world so crowded with suffering and so deformed by injustice as ours" Unfortunately, however, this "ideal conception of a perfect Being" is not a *power* on which human nature can lean. It is merely its own best thought of itself, so that it dwindles when the mind and heart contract, and vanishes just when there is most need of help. This Mr. Mill himself felt at one period of his life. At the age of twenty he underwent a crisis, which apparently corresponded in his own opinion to the state of mind that leads to "a Wesleyan's conversion" . . .

It is clear that Mr. Mill felt the deep craving for a more permanent and durable source of spiritual life, than any which the most beneficent activity spent in patching up human institutions and laboriously recasting the structure of human society could secure him,—that he himself had a suspicion that, to use the language of a book he had been taught to make light of, his soul was thirsting for God, and groping after an eternal presence, in which he lived and moved and had his being. What is strange and almost burlesque, if it were not so melancholy, is the mode in which this moral crisis culminates. A few tears shed over Marmontel's "*Mémoires*," and the fit passed away.—

"Two lines of Coleridge, in whom alone of all writers I have found a true description of what I felt, were often in my thoughts, not at this time (for I had never read them), but in a later period of the same mental malady—

" ' Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,  
And hope without an object cannot live ' "

In all probability my case was by no means so peculiar as I fancied it, and I doubt not that many others have passed through a similar state; but the idiosyncrasies of my education had given to the general phenomenon a special character, which made it seem the natural effect of causes that it was hardly possible for time to remove. I frequently asked myself if I could or if I was bound to go on living, when life must be passed in this manner. I generally answered to myself that I did not think I could possibly bear it beyond a year. When, however, not more than half that duration of time had elapsed, a small ray of light broke in upon my gloom. I was reading accidentally Marmontel's '*Mémoires*,' and came to the passage which relates his father's death, the distressed position of the family, and the sudden in-

aspiration by which he, then a mere boy, felt and made them feel that he would be everything to them—would supply the place of all that they had lost. A vivid conception of the scene and its feelings came over me, and I was moved to tears. From this moment my burden grew lighter. The oppression of the thought that all feeling was dead within me was gone. I was no longer hopeless, I was not a stock or a stone. I had still, it seemed, some of the material out of which all worth of character and all capacity for happiness are made. Relieved from my ever-present sense of irremediable wretchedness, I gradually found out that the ordinary incidents of life could again give me some pleasure, that I could again find enjoyment, not intense, but sufficient for cheerfulness, in sunshine and sky, in books, in conversation, in public affairs, and that there was once more excitement, though of a moderate kind, in exerting myself for my opinions, and for the public good. Thus the cloud gradually drew off, and I again enjoyed life, and though I had several relapses, some of which lasted many months, I never again was as miserable as I had been."

And the only permanent instruction which this experience left behind it seems to have been curiously slight. It produced a threefold moral result—first, a grave alarm at the dangerously-undermining capacities of his own power of moral analysis which promised to unravel all those artificial moral webs of painful and pleasurable associations with injurious and useful actions respectively, which his father had so laboriously woven for him during his childhood and youth and further, two notable practical conclusions—one, that in order to attain happiness (which he "never wavered" in regarding as "the test of all rules of conduct and the end of life") the best strategy is a kind of flank march, to aim at something else, at some ideal end, not consciously as a means to happiness, but as an end in itself,—so, he held, may you have a better chance of securing happiness by the way than you can by any direct pursuit of it, and the other, that it is most desirable to cultivate the feelings, the passive susceptibilities, as well as the reasoning and active powers, if the utilitarian life is to be made enjoyable. Surely a profound sense of the inadequacy of ordinary human success to the craving of the human spirit was never followed by a less radical moral change. That it resulted in a new breadth of sympathy with writers like Coleridge and Wordsworth, whose fundamental modes of thought and faith Mr. Mill entirely rejected, but for whose mode of sentiment, after this period of his life, he somehow managed, not very intelligibly, to make room, is very true, and it is also true that this gave a new largeness of tone to his writings, and gave him a real superiority in all matters of taste to the utilitarian clique



to which he had belonged—results which enormously widened the scope of his influence, and changed him from the mere expositor of a single school of psychology into the thoughtful critic of many different schools. But as far as we can judge, all this new breadth was gained at the cost of a certain haze, which, from this time forth, spread itself over his grasp of the first principles which he still professed to hold. He did not cease to be a utilitarian, but he ceased to distinguish between the duty of promoting your own happiness and of promoting anybody else's, and never could make it clear where he found his moral obligation to sacrifice the former to the latter. He still maintained that actions, and not sentiments, are the true objects of ethical discrimination; but he discovered that there was a significance which he had never before suspected even in sentiments and emotions of which he continued to maintain that the origin was artificial and arbitrary. He did not cease to declaim against the prejudices engendered by the intuitionist theory of philosophy, but he made it one of his peculiar distinctions as an experience-philosopher, that he recommended the fostering of new prepossessions, only distinguished from the prejudices he strove to dissipate by being, in his opinion, harmless, though quite as little based as those in ultimate or objective truth. He maintained as strongly as ever that the character of man is formed by circumstances, but he discovered that the will can act upon circumstances, and so modify its own future capability of willing, and though it is in his opinion circumstances which enable or induce the will thus to act upon circumstances, he taught and thought that this makes all the difference between fatalism and the doctrine of cause and effect as applied to character. After his influx of new light he remained as strong a democrat as ever, but he ceased to believe in the self-interest principle as universally efficient to produce good government when applied to multitudes, and indeed qualified his democratic theory by an intellectual aristocracy of feeling, which to our minds is the essence of exclusiveness. "A person of high intellect," he writes, "should never go into unintellectual society, unless he can enter it as an apostle, yet he is the only person with high objects who can ever enter it at all." You can hardly have exclusiveness more extreme than that, or a doctrine more strangely out of moral sympathy with the would-be universalism of the Benthamite theory. In fact, it seems to us, Mr. Mill's unquestionable breadth of philosophic treatment was

gained at the cost of a certain ambiguity which fell over the root-principles of his philosophy—an ambiguity by which he gained for it a more catholic repute than it deserved. The result of the moral crisis through which Mr. Mill passed at the age of twenty may be described briefly, in our opinion, as this that it gave him *tastes* far in advance of his philosophy—foretastes, in fact, of a true philosophy, and that this moral flavour of something truer and wider served him in place of the substance of anything truer and wider during the rest of his life. . . .

On the whole, the book will be found, we think, even by Mr. Mill's most strenuous disciples, a dreary one. It shows that in spite of all Mr. Mill's genuine and generous compassion for human misery and his keen desire to alleviate it, his relation to concrete humanity was of a very confined and reserved kind,—one brightened by few personal ties, and those few not, except in about two cases, really hearty ones. The multitude was to him an object of compassion and of genuine beneficence, but he had no pleasure in men, no delight in actual intercourse with this strange, various, homely world of motley faults and virtues. His nature was composed of a few very fine threads, but wanted a certain strength of basis, and the general effect, though one of high and even enthusiastic disinterestedness, is meagre and pallid. His tastes were refined, but there was a want of homeliness about his hopes. He was too strenuously didactic to be in sympathy with man, and too incessantly analytic to throw his burden upon God. There was something overstrained in all that was noblest in him, this excess seeming to be by way of compensation, as it were, for the number of regions of life in which he found little or nothing where other men find so much. He was strangely deficient in humour, which, perhaps, we ought not to regret, for had he had it, his best work would, in all probability, have been greatly hampered by such a gift. Unique in intellectual ardour and moral disinterestedness, of tender heart and fastidious tastes, though narrow in his range of practical sympathies, his name will long be famous as that of the most wide-minded and generous of political economists, the most disinterested of Utilitarian moralists, and the most accomplished and impartial of empirical philosophers. But as a man, there was in him a certain poverty of nature, in spite of the nobleness in him, a monotonous joylessness, in spite of the hectic sanguineness of

his theoretic creed, a want of genial trust, which spurred on into an almost artificial zeal his ardour for philosophic reconstruction; and these are qualities which will probably put a well-marked limit on the future propagation of an influence such as few writers on such subjects have ever before attained within the period of their own lifetime.

Our own comments on the autobiography shall be confined to one or two points, on which it illustrates (as we think, very instructively) Mr. Mill's habits and character, as a thinker on philosophy and religion. And firstly, the present work makes it abundantly clear that we were correct in our estimate of his opinion on religious subjects. By "deism" is commonly understood the doctrine, that an infinitely perfect Being is Author of the universe, but that this Being has made no revelation to mankind. Mr. Mill considers this doctrine no less obviously irrational and immoral than Christianity itself. His father, he said (pp. 39-40), "found it impossible to believe that a world so full of evil was the work of an Author combining infinite power with perfect goodness and righteousness. His intellect spurned the subtleties by which men attempted to blind themselves to this open contradiction." And in this passage, as our readers will have observed, Mr. Mill not only narrates as a fact his father's unbelief, but adds on his own account the statement that "Theism is an open contradiction." In p. 46 he says that "the ideal of good" framed by such thinkers as himself, "is usually far nearer to perfection than the objective Deity of those who think themselves obliged to find absolute goodness in the author of a world so crowded with suffering and so deformed with injustice as ours." And in p. 70 he laments that "those who reject revelation very generally take refuge in an optimistic deism, a worship of the order of nature and the supposed course of Providence, at least as full of contradictions and perverting to the moral sentiments as any of the

forms of Christianity, if only it is as completely realized." Moreover, any one who reads the volume will see that these passages express what was his own doctrine from first to last. If, then, by the term "God" be understood an "infinitely perfect Being"—Omnipotence, of course, being included in "Perfection"—nothing can be clearer than that Mr. Mill throughout his life confidently denied the existence of God. He implies, indeed (p. 39), that "dogmatic atheism" is absurd: but he himself was in the ordinary sense of the term a "dogmatic atheist;" because he confidently denied the existence of any such Being as Him who is ordinarily called "God."

It may be worth while to add, that he not only rejected deism as confidently as he rejected Christianity, but that he thought Christianity the less unreasonable of the two. His father "spoke with respect" of Butler's "Analogy" (p. 38), which

kept him, as he said, for some considerable time, a believer in the divine authority of Christianity, by proving to him that whatever are the difficulties in believing that the Old and New Testaments proceed from, or record the acts of, a perfectly wise and good Being, the same and still greater difficulties stand in the way of the belief that a Being of such a character can have been the Maker of the universe. He considered Butler's argument as conclusive against the only opponents for whom it was intended. Those who admit an omnipotent as well as perfectly just and benevolent Maker and Ruler of such a world as this, can say little against Christianity but what can, with at least equal force, be retorted against themselves (p. 39).

In this last sentence, as in a former instance, the author is avowedly expressing what is his own opinion as well as his father's. In his view, then, the deistic theory is not only faulty on the same ground with the Christian, but has the *additional* faultiness of adducing arguments against Christianity which are equally destructive of deism itself.

Further, from the very first opening of his reason to

the day on which this autobiography was concluded, no shade of doubt on the absolute and even obvious certainty of atheism seems to have even momentarily crossed his mind. At one critical period of his life (see pp. 132-146) he was led to question profoundly the whole basis on which he had been so carefully trained, and which he had hitherto assumed as indubitable. He was impelled by the very strongest motives to look in every possible direction for some relief; and yet there was one direction in which he never thought of looking, viz. belief in God.\* No one more heartily denounced than he all habit of passive acquiescence (as he would call it) in tenets once learned; yet his faith in atheism seems really to have rivalled, in firmness, tenacity, undoubtingness, unfaltering persistency, the faith of Catholics in the great verities of their creed. Of every other tenet which he held, he felt it his duty again and again to re-examine the grounds: but the truth of atheism was too self-evident in his view to need re-examination. Catholics, in accordance with their fundamental principles, hold the truth of Catholicity firmly and irrespectively of inquiry; while Mr. Mill chose, in the very teeth of his fundamental principles, to hold the truth of atheism firmly and irrespectively of inquiry.

And at last what was the intellectual foundation of this blind persistency? Strange to say of a phenomenistic philosopher, it was his absolute trust in the self-evident character of a certain alleged axiom. He had been taught from childhood to account it a self-evident contradiction in terms, that a world so abounding in evil as this can have been created by a Being infinite at once in love and in power. It is meant by the very term "Infinite in love"—so he had been taught to think—that such a Being imparts all the happiness He possibly can; and it is meant

\* He says in one place (p 43), "I am one of the very few examples in this country who has not thrown off religious belief, but never had it"

by the very term "Infinite in power," that He *can* impart all the happiness He may wish. Looking, then, at the experienced facts of life, he held that the affirmation of God's Existence is not merely a statement open to innumerable objections and surrounded by innumerable difficulties—though this also he *would* have said—but a direct contradiction in terms; as though one spoke of a crooked straight line of a round square. We on our side maintain, not only that his thesis is indefensible, but that it will not bear a moment's consideration. We are not able, indeed, to draw out an intelligible argument on this head, until we can discuss the matter as a whole; until we are directly engaged in that theistic controversy on which this series of essays is intended to converge. Even when we *are* engaged in that controversy, we are not so insane as to imagine that we can explain *how* it is that such a world as this can have proceeded from an infinitely loving and powerful Creator. Nay, the Catholic is not called on to show positively, that any given objection of antitheists is invalid, because it is rather *their* business to prove it *valid*.\* The Catholic begins by drawing out the direct proof of God's Existence—a proof of the most urgent, immediate, irrefragable, irresistible character that can well be imagined, which penetrates the inmost depths of the human heart, and which reasonably convinces million millions of men, who would be wholly incapable of understanding its scientific analysis. Of course, on the imaginary supposition that any argument could be adduced on the opposite side, which demonstratively disproves God's Existence—absolute scepticism must result; and the Catholic philosopher is therefore required further to answer any such alleged argument. But here his obligation manifestly ends. We

\* So as regards *e.g.* transubstantiation. Catholic philosophers do not profess to show that this dogma is reconcilable with reason, they content themselves with showing that it cannot be *proved* irreconcilable therewith.

do not for a moment deny that the task incumbent on him is arduous, and requires care, though it can most certainly be achieved with triumphant success ; but we maintain that to answer *Mr. Mill's* thesis is a task of no arduousness at all. It may be arduous (though it is superabundantly practicable) to answer this or that objection, which professes to show *by a train of reasoning* that such a world as this cannot have proceeded from an infinitely perfect Being ; but it is most easy to answer *Mr. Mill's* allegation, that this impossibility is a *self-evident axiom*.

Now, before going a step further, we must emphatically premise one explanation. That *Mr. Mill's* irreligion was due to grave personal sin on his part, we hold with firmest faith ; because the Church teaches that there is no invincible ignorance of God. But if it be asked in what particular acts or omissions that sin consisted, we must reply that it is God only Who knows men's thoughts , and that we must renounce absolutely and heartily all notion of forming any judgment whatever on such a question. It is not, however, at all inconsistent with this profession, to point out that in this, that, and the other particular, *Mr. Mill's* procedure was evidently faulty ; because in no one instance do we hazard a conjecture that in that particular case he was acting culpably and against light. And it is plainly of moment to show that his procedure *was* fundamentally faulty, in order that his authority may be estimated at no more than its true value.

Now, certainly there was one knowledge which, before all others, it behoved him to acquire ; viz. the true character of the religion professed by his fellow-countrymen. There was one Man, says *Mr. Mill* himself (" *On Liberty*," p. 47), " who left on the memory of those who watched His life and conversation such an impression of His moral grandeur, that eighteen subsequent centuries have done homage to Him as the Almighty in person ; " God in human nature.

What is more obviously incumbent on an inquiring student than to study carefully the religion taught by this Man? Nor are there wanting the most authentic possible records of that teaching. St. Paul *e.g.* would surely be as important an author to master, as Demosthenes, Tacitus, Juvenal, Quintilian (pp. 20, 21). Still more important to study would be the extant memoirs of that Man, to Whom we have already referred; as such memoirs were recorded by disciples "who witnessed His life and conversation," and on whom "such an impression of His moral grandeur" was produced. Now, we are not professing here to set forth how such studies might have assisted in drawing Mr. Mill from darkness to light, we are but alleging his utter neglect of them, as proving his profound prejudice and obduracy on things religious.

In no other way will the fact of this utter neglect be more vividly impressed on the imagination of our readers, than if we briefly recount the course of his studies. and this also on other accounts is a matter of some interest. By the time he was eight years old (p. 8) he had read Herodotus, Xenophon's *Memorabilia* and *Cyropædia*, parts of Diogenes Laertius, Lucian and Isocrates (p. 5); the histories of Robertson, Hume, Gibbon, Watson, Hooker, and much of Rollin; Plutarch's *Lives*; Burnet's *History of his Own Time*; a large portion of the *Annual Register* (p. 7); Millar's *Historical View of the English Government*, and numerous books of adventure and of amusement (pp. 8, 9). He says, indeed (p. 48), that he "has mentioned at how early an age his father made him a reader of ecclesiastical history:" but on looking back at the earlier passage to which this refers, we find that what he has mentioned in this line consisted only of Mosheim's *History*; M'Crie's *Life of John Knox*; and Sewell's and Rutt's *Histories of the Quakers* (p. 8). At about the same period (p. 48) his father "taught him to take the strongest interest



in the Reformation, as the great and decisive contest against priestly tyranny for liberty of thought." Mr. Mill also (*ib.*) learned his father's account of "what had been thought by mankind on the impenetrable problems," of which Christianity is one attempted solution. From these studies he proceeded (p. 11) to Virgil, Horace, Phædrus, Livy, Sallust, Ovid, Terence, Lucretius, Cicero, Homer, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Thucydides, Xenophon's *Hellenics*, Demosthenes, *Æschines*, *Lysias*, *Theocritus*, *Anacreon*, *Dionysius*, *Polybius*, *Aristotle's Rhetoric*\* (p. 11), and *Mitford's History of Greece* (p. 12). He also read some of *Milton's* poetry, *Goldsmith's*, *Burns's*, *Walter Scott's*, *Dryden's*, *Cowper's*, and *Campbell's*; also *Joyce's Scientific Dialogues*, and various treatises on chemistry (pp. 16, 17). At twelve years old he began *Logic* (p. 18), and at the same age he read the *Athenian orators*, *Tacitus*, *Juvenal*, and *Quintilian* (p. 21). At about the same period (p. 24) he studied very carefully his father's *History of British India*; and must have possessed, therefore (we may mention by the way), a far more accurate knowledge of *Hindoo theology* than he ever had of *Christian*. Then he advanced to *political economy* (p. 28). Later on came a little *psychology* (p. 62); and he then embarked on a course of *jurisprudence* and *Bentham* (p. 64). To these he added (pp. 68, 69) *Locke*, *Helvetius*, *Hartley*, *Berkeley*, *Hume's Essays*, *Reid*, *Dugald Stewart*, and some of *Brown*. He also read an anonymous work against "optimistic deism" (pp. 69-71), which "contributed materially to his development." He says expressly (p. 71): "I have now, I believe, mentioned all the books which had any considerable effect on my earlier mental development;" and adds: "From this point I began to carry on my intellectual cultivation by writing

\* F Newman says ("Idea of a University," p. 100), that the classics have in France subserved the spread of deism the elder Mr Mill seems to have used them in the interest of atheism.

still more than by reading." It is an undeniable fact, then, that when he first began his irreligious crusade,\* he had never given himself ever so superficially, either to a study of Christian doctrine, or to an examination of the arguments adduced for God's Existence. And his conduct was even more remarkable at the mental crisis to which we have already referred, when he was carried off violently from his old moorings, and was looking everywhere for a haven of rest. He was led to seek refuge in various teachings of Coleridge, of Maurice, of Sterling: but the thought did not so much as occur to him that anything solid could be said in behalf of what they, one and all, accounted the centre of their whole life, their belief in Christianity.

A curious fact indeed may be adduced from this volume, in further confirmation of our remark on the complete absence of Christianity from his thoughts. We have already pointed out how high was his estimation (if we may use such words without profaneness, even when recounting an infidel's opinion) of our Blessed Lord's character and work. On the other hand, he states (p 118) that he had obtained most valuable culture "by means of reverential admiration for the lives and characters of heroic persons, especially the heroes of philosophy:" and he mentions two objects of this reverential admiration in particular; viz. Socrates and Turgot. It did not enter his mind, apparently, to regard the Founder of Christianity as even occupying a high place among the heroic benefactors of mankind.

One cannot be surprised, then, at that ignorance of the most elementary Christian doctrines, which meets one in every corner of his writings where he mentions Christianity at all. Of this we will cite an instance which occurs in

\* It may most truly be called this, because from the first it was the aim of his publications to promote the radical reform of society on some irreligious basis or other

the present volume. We extract the passage to which we refer, italicizing one clause.

Of unbelievers (so called), as well as of believers, there are many species, including almost every variety of moral type. But the best among them, as no one who has had opportunities of really knowing them will hesitate to affirm, are more genuinely religious, in the best sense of the word religion, than those who exclusively arrogate to themselves the title. The liberality of the age, or, in other words, the weakening of the obstinate prejudice which makes men unable to see what is before their eyes because it is contrary to their expectations, has caused it to be very commonly admitted that a deist may be truly religious, but *if religion stands for any graces of character, and not for mere dogma*, the assertion may equally be made of many whose belief is far short of deism. Though they may think the proof incomplete that the universe is a work of design, and though they assuredly disbelieve that it can have an Author and Governor who is *absolute* in power as well as perfect in goodness, they have that which constitutes the principal worth of all religions whatever, an ideal conception of a Perfect Being, to which they habitually refer as the guide of their conscience, and this ideal of Good is usually far nearer to perfection than the objective Deity of those who think themselves obliged to find absolute goodness in the author of a world so crowded with suffering and so deformed by injustice as ours (pp. 45-46).

No doubt, by the word "religion," are meant certain "graces of character, and not mere dogma." But what graces? Would Mr. Mill have used the word "religion" to express justice as such? or benevolence as such? or veracity as such? or fortitude or temperance as such? Of course there would be no sense in his doing so. What is ordinarily meant by "religion" as a grace of character is the habit of communion with God. A person is more "religious" in proportion as he more has his thoughts fixed on God's presence; in proportion as the whole stream of his life is devoted to the end of loving and obeying God. It is most intelligible, then, to say that a deist can be

"religious;" and all those indeed must think the saying true, who consider (as we do) that there may be invincible ignorance on the divine origin of Christianity. Such a saying results from faithfulness to the rules of logic, not from so-called "liberalty" or "weakening of prejudice." But what can possibly be meant by an *atheist* being "religious"? How can any man remember God's presence, if he do not believe that God exists? how can he devote his life to loving and obeying God, if he thinks there is no God to be loved and obeyed?

When first we hear it, then, such language seems simply astounding: but on consideration, one comes to see what it indicates. It indicates that Mr. Mill had no notion of what it is which Christians mean, when they speak of "religiousness" or "piety." Had it not been for Mr. Mill's case, we should have said that even those who do not practise religion, know well what is *meant* by these terms; but Mr. Mill, while leading a life of laborious study, remained to the end of his life profoundly ignorant of the very existence of what the whole world around him knew to be among the most widely extended and powerful springs of human conduct. And this was the man who sat in judgment, as if from an elevated pedestal, on the acts and motives of saintly persons; who claimed superiority over the prejudices of the vulgar; who condescendingly patronized the mediæval Church; who was kind enough to see even in modern Catholicity much which he was happy to approve, though far more which he was obliged to condemn.\*

It may seem heartless if, while making these comments, we do not pause for a moment to bewail the hard lot of

\* Observe *e.g.* such a sentence as this: "There are men who, not disguising their own unbelief, have written deeper and finer things in vindication of what religion has done for mankind, than would have sufficed to found the reputation of some of its most admired defenders" ("Dissertations and Discussions," vol. II. p. 122).

one, by nature so teachable, loving, and sensitive, placed from his birth under the iron yoke of that bigoted and intolerant atheist his father, and indoctrinated by him so carefully to paganism. But (as we have already said) we are attempting no appreciation whatever of his personal character; we are but mentioning this or that fact, which bears importantly on the value of his speculations whether in the sphere of religion or philosophy.

For, indeed, even in the matter of social philosophy, how fatal to his intellectual character is what we have just mentioned! He was ignorant (as we have said) of the very existence of what is among the most widely extended and powerful springs of human conduct. The main purpose of his life was to act directly or indirectly on the convictions and actions of his contemporaries. To do so with any hope of success, it was necessary that he should clearly understand their *existing* motives, impulses, instincts. And yet, in one very prominent particular, he was as ignorant of the moral world in the midst of which he passed his days as though he had never read of the past nor lived in the present.

Then, again—considering he claimed to take a leading position in metaphysics and psychology—how noteworthy was his ignorance of what Catholics have done in that direction. For many centuries a series of men, admitted by Mr. Mill himself to be powerful thinkers, had concentrated their intellectual energy on the work of raising an edifice of theological science, on the basis of the scholastic philosophy. We should not have been surprised, however profoundly Mr. Mill might have differed from them: what does surprise us is, that he took no pains to know them. What would he have thought of himself, if he had written his work on Hamilton without acquiring a knowledge of Kant's philosophy? Of course, whether Kant be or be not intellectually superior to the giants of scholasticism, is a

matter of opinion : but it is a matter of undeniable fact that the latter immeasurably surpassed him in the influence of their speculations on the whole course of thought and of society for many centuries. Yet, undeterred by this crass ignorance, Mr. Mill permitted himself very freely to criticize the intellectual characteristics of those very centuries.

It will be said, perhaps, that at all events other anti-theistic philosophers of the day are no less unacquainted with Catholic theology and philosophy than Mr. Mill. We heartily endorse this remark. Their dense ignorance of Catholicity is a mark of their crooked and perverse intellectual habits, which can be appreciated by the most ordinarily educated Catholic. In fact, they are less acquainted with Catholicity, and have far less wish to be acquainted, than had Mr. Mill himself.\* But, then, the latter always laid claim to exceptional large-mindedness, and honestly believed such claim to be legitimate. He accounted himself "much superior to most of his contemporaries in willingness and ability to learn from everybody" (p. 242). He professed "great readiness and eagerness to learn from everybody, and to make room in his opinions for every new acquisition by adjusting the old and new to one another" (p. 252). He was eager to learn from every quarter, except only the Catholic Church.

There are other passages in the autobiography besides those we have mentioned, which bear importantly on Mr. Mill's philosophical tenets : but (with one exception to be immediately mentioned) they will be more conveniently considered in subsequent essays, especially when we come to handle again his utilitarian tenets. We therefore proceed

\* Mr. Mill's autobiography has not unnaturally caused for the moment a reaction against him, even as compared with other writers of the same school. We look forward to a reaction against this reaction. To our mind, no one of the rest approaches him either in intellectual clearness, candour, and ability, nor, again, in zealous philanthropy

to resume our controversy with him, at the point where we left off in the preceding essay.

The principal topic with which we were occupied was a consideration of Mr. Mill's reply to the arguments we had adduced against him, on the necessary character of mathematical axioms. It might appear, on the surface, that this is somewhat a subordinate question, in its bearing on the very vital points at issue between Mr. Mill and ourselves; but we replied, that Mr. Mill "would have been the last to make this complaint." Our statement is fully borne out by the autobiography. He accounted the controversy between intuitionism and phenomenism far more fundamental than any other, in matters no less of social than of strictly philosophical speculation; and he accounted the discussion on the necessary character of mathematical axioms to be the very turning-point of this controversy. The former opinion is expressed in p. 278; and in p. 226 he declares, that "*the chief strength*" of the philosophy which he assails "*in morals, politics, and religion, lies in the appeal which it is accustomed to make to the evidence of mathematics and the cognate branches of physical science.*" "To keep it from these," he adds, "*is to drive it from its stronghold;*" and by parity of reason, if we *maintain* it in these, we maintain it in its stronghold. No one, then, could have a stronger conviction than Mr. Mill himself, on the vital character of the issue which we joined with him. We candidly expressed our opinion as to the utterly worthless character of his reasoning. "We are deliberately of opinion," we said, "that not one of his arguments has the slightest force, and hardly one of them the most superficial appearance of force." "The whole mass of human knowledge," we further alleged, "*is made,*" by him, "*utterly dependent on what is about the most gratuitous and arbitrary theory which can well*

be imagined." And we added, that Mr. Mill's death had been to us a severe controversial disappointment. We had been eager to engage in a hand-to-hand conflict with so distinguished a champion, not on a few questions only, however fundamental, but on the whole mass of philosophical speculations, which leads onward to that one supreme issue, the Existence of a Personal God. We were full of confidence that a signal triumph must result to the cause of truth, if we could induce Mr. Mill to put forth his utmost strength on the other side.

At the same time, we are glad to think that the keystone of his whole philosophical position lies in those very doctrines on which he lived to publish his reply to our adverse arguments. Every philosopher of the present day has his "aggressive" as well as his "affirmative" position. You understand his "aggressive" position so far as you understand what those tenets are which he desires to overthrow, and you understand his "affirmative" position so far as you understand what those tenets are which he desires to establish in their place. Now, Mr. Mill's "aggressive" position mainly consisted, (1) in his denying the cognizableness of any necessary truths; and (2) (as a means for that denial) in his denying the competence of men's existent faculties to avouch truth finally and without appeal. Whereas, then, he regards the very "stronghold" of necessitists to be their view of mathematical axioms, we may fairly say that the keystone of his "aggressive" position consists (1) in his doctrine on mathematical axioms, and (2) in his doctrine on the rule of certitude. On the other hand, his "affirmative" position mainly consists in his claim to substitute a body of science built exclusively on experience, for a body of science purporting to be built partly on necessary truth. But no body of science can possibly be built on the exclusive basis of experience, unless the philosopher first establishes on grounds of experience



the uniformity of nature ; or what Mr. Mill calls "the law of universal causation." Mr. Mill himself admits this as heartily as we maintain it. The keystone, then, of Mr. Mill's "affirmative" position lies in his doctrine, that the uniformity of nature can be proved by experience ; while the keystone of his "aggressive" position lies (as we have seen) in his respective doctrines, on mathematical axioms, and on the rule of certitude. And it so happens that these are the very three doctrines on which he expressly replied to our adverse arguments. In our last essay we commenced our rejoinder on that reply, and on the present occasion are to complete it. It is certainly a great matter of regret to us, for the sake of truth, that such rejoinder must now necessarily be final ; and it would have been a matter of keen interest to us to know how he would have encountered our remarks.

Our last essay was much longer than we could have wished ; but we were very desirous of drawing out uninterruptedly our whole counter-argument on the necessity of mathematical axioms. To prevent our essay, however, from swelling to an absolutely intolerable length, we were obliged to omit all *summary* of our lengthened reasoning. And we feel this to have been so great a disadvantage, that one of our first procedures on the present occasion will be in some degree to supply that deficiency.

Before commencing this, however, we shall make a little further comment on a position of Mr. Mill's, which we criticized. Our readers, on referring to our previous remarks, will see that he makes two statements. Firstly, he says that "wherever the present constitution of space exists," the axioms of geometry are cognizable to mankind as "*conclusions* from that conception." Secondly, he adds, that we have ample reason to know,\* that the same

\* His word is to "believe," but on looking at the context our reader will see that he certainly means "know"

"constitution of space which exists on our own planet, exists also in the region of the fixed stars." Now what does he mean by this extremely vague term "constitution of space"? We can fancy his indignation, if one of his *opponents* had used so vague a term as this without explanation. Yet we affirm, with some confidence, that Mr. Mill has nowhere even attempted to explain what he meant by the term; and we doubt indeed whether he ever used it, except in the two notes, replying to our own criticism, which he inserted in the latest edition of his respective works on "*Logic*" and on "*Hamilton*."

There is only one meaning which we can think of as intended by this phrase. We must suppose that he accounts "the present constitution of space" as existing wherever the three dimensions—length, breadth, height—are predicable of all material objects. But if this were his meaning, he would hold that a man can "conclude" the truth of geometrical axioms "from his very conception" of length, breadth, and height. This, however, is the precise point at issue between him and his opponents; and if such were his meaning, he would be saying in so many words that his opponents are in the right and he in the wrong. We would beg our readers to look back at our whole criticism in pp. 176–179. For our own part, we believe this is one of the cases—far more numerous throughout Mr. Mill's works than might be supposed—in which his spontaneous reason is too strong for his artificial and elaborated philosophy.

We will next direct our readers' attention to a remark we made a page earlier. We observed how difficult it is to know what is Mr. Mill's positive thesis, on the cognizableness of mathematical axioms; and also to know what are the *grounds* alleged by him for such thesis. He declares again and again, that the universal truth of these axioms, throughout the planet Terra at least, is *irrefragably* proved

by universal experience. Yet what does he himself say on another occasion? "That all metals sink in water, was a uniform experience from the origin of the human race down to the discovery of potassium in the present century by Sir Humphry Davy. That all swans are white, was a uniform experience down to the discovery of Australia" ("Logic," vol. i. p. 305). What stronger ground, then, has he for his conviction that over the whole earth trilaterals are triangular, than his ancestors had for their entirely mistaken conviction that over the whole earth swans are white and metals sink in water? How can he even guess that in some newly-discovered country a tree may not be found which shall possess the capability of being formed into quadrangular trilaterals, or into pairs of straight lines of which each pair shall enclose a space?

Mr. Mill, however, is much less anxious to state and establish his positive than his negative thesis on mathematical axioms, and unless his whole fabric of philosophy is to collapse,\* he must prove that these axioms are *not* self-evidently necessary. We, on the contrary, as zealous impugnors of his philosophy, have been bent on proving the contrary. And the general argument we have used may be thus syllogistically stated.

Whatever the existent cognitive faculties of mankind testify, is instinctively† known by mankind as certainly true.

\* This must not be understood in too extreme a sense. In a former essay, we said that, on such a supposition, "his works might still be admitted to contain a large quantity of valuable philosophical matter, *as we think indeed they do*; but his philosophy as a whole would be at an end." This is precisely what we still think.

† We had at first said "self-evidently," but in our last essay we found it more convenient to appropriate that phrase in a different sense. We think the word "instinctively" the best substitute, as expressing the irresistible and (as it were) piercing character of the convictions to which we refer. Let any reader consider the keen certitude with which he knows that he experienced those sensations of ten minutes back, which his memory vividly testifies.

But the existent cognitive faculties of mankind testify, that any given mathematical axiom is self-evidently necessary.

Ergo, etc.

Now, it is most surprising that a writer generally so clear as Mr. Mill, should so long have left it uncertain *which* of these two propositions it is which he denies: see *e.g.* the mutually contradictory propositions which we quoted from him in our last essay. Such, however, being the case, we entered at length into the proof of *both* the above premisses. But after reading the autobiography, we can hardly doubt that it is the former of the two premisses against which Mr. Mill protests.\* We shall not, therefore, here attempt to epitomize our argument for our minor premiss; but we shall content ourselves on that head with referring our readers to the whole course of our remarks. We will but briefly say here, that it would certainly be a bold step to deny this premiss. Take any man of ordinary thoughtfulness and education; and ask him whether it is within the sphere of Omnipotence to enclose a space by two straight lines, or to create a quadrangular trilateral: there can be very little doubt what his spontaneous answer will be. We here, then, assume Mr. Mill to accept our minor premiss, we assume him to concede that, if mankind trust their existent faculties, it is impossible for them to doubt the self-evident necessity of any given mathematical axiom.

Mr. Mill, then, we take it, would have argued in some such manner as this: and we confine ourselves for clearness' sake to geometrical axioms, because whatever is said of them may so easily be applied to arithmetical. "From the first moment when an infant begins to move his arms and legs," Mr. Mill would say, "he is beginning to acquire

\* See particularly a passage in pp. 225, 226, which we shall quote in a later part of our paper.

knowledge on the elementary truths of geometry. Before arriving at the age of reason, he has been completely saturated with his experience that two intersecting straight lines always diverge, and that a straight line is the shortest path between two points. No wonder, then, that, when he comes to use his faculties, they are not only unable to conceive any thought contrary to this uniform experience, but have even been so moulded by that experience as to pronounce its various particulars so many self-evidently necessary truths."

Our answer to this view of things is virtually contained in the essay to which we have referred; but none the less it may be of important service if we reproduce it under a different arrangement. We say, then, that two different replies may be made to Mr. Mill's reasoning, as here drawn out. It may be replied (1), that no such experience of geometrical axioms as an adult has acquired could possibly produce on his faculties such a result as Mr. Mill contends for. And it may be replied (2), that the testimony of each man's existent faculties is his infallible rule of certitude; and that he has no legitimate appeal from their present to their past avouchment. If *either* of these replies be substantiated, Mr. Mill's argument falls entirely to the ground; but we are confident that *both* can easily be substantiated, and we shall proceed at once to do so. It is the second on which we are far the more anxious to fix our readers' attention; but it will be more convenient if we begin with the first.

We are assuming, then, Mr. Mill to agree with ourselves, that men's existent faculties avouch the self-evident necessity of some given geometrical axiom. But he maintains that this avouchment of theirs can be explained by the constant and unmistakable experience of that axiom which every adult has gone through. We reply that their avouchment is *not* thus explainable. It is quite untrue, we say, that any experience of any geometrical axiom, which

an adult has had in his childhood, has any tendency so to affect his faculties as that on that account they shall pronounce such axiom to be a necessary truth. There were three different arguments adduced by us in our last essay for this proposition, either of which alone would be conclusive.

I. According to Mr. Mill, such unintermittent and unmistakable experience as I have had of any given geometrical axioms suffices to make it impossible for me to doubt, if I trust my existent faculties, that the reversal of that axiom is beyond the sphere of Omnipotence. But if this were so, it must follow that in proportion as I have more accumulated experience of any truth, in that proportion I find it more *difficult* (if I trust my existent faculties) to regard the reversal of that truth as within the sphere of Omnipotence. But is this anything like the case? Most evidently not. Suppose I have only once or twice in my life tasted beet-root; while, on the other hand (of course), times without number I have felt fire to burn, and seen wood float on water while stones sink therein. Yet most assuredly I have not to the very smallest extent any greater difficulty in supposing that an Omnipotent Creator could prevent fire from burning or could support stones in the water, than in supposing that He could alter the taste of beet-root.

II. Let us take, as an instance of a geometrical axiom, the proposition that two parallel straight lines will never meet, \* and let us take as our instance of an obvious physical fact, the warmth-giving property of fire. No one who reflects will doubt that an English child's experience of the latter truth is (to say the least) every whit as constant and uniform as his experience of the former. Yet

\* We define a "straight line" to be "a line which pursues throughout the same direction," and we define "parallel straight lines" to be "straight lines which pursue the same direction with each other"

when he comes to the age of reason, he pronounces that the former is a necessary truth; whereas he would be simply amazed at the allegation that an Omnipotent Creator could not on any given occasion deprive fire of its warmth-giving property.

Now, Mr. Mill himself admits this latter fact; but he has a reply. "Fire," he says ("On Hamilton," p. 339), "it is true, will, under certain needful conditions, give warmth; but the sight of fire is often unattended with any sensation of warmth. . . . The visible presence of fire and the sensation of warmth are not in that invariable conjunction and immediate juxtaposition which might disable us from conceiving one without the other, and which might therefore lead us to suppose their conjunction a necessary truth." He indicates here, we suppose, such apparent exceptions to the warmth-giving property of fire as take place when, being out of doors, one sees a fire through the window without receiving warmth from it. And so (*ibid*) his general proposition is, that in order to generate the mind's conviction of self-evident necessity, "the experience must not only be constant and uniform, but the juxtaposition of the facts in experience must be immediate and close, as well as so free from even the semblance of an exception that no counter-association can possibly arise." Wherever, then, there has been in past experience even the *semblance* of an exception—according to Mr. Mill—there no conviction of self-evident necessity will arise. To this we answered, that (on his own showing) there has been in past experience the semblance of an exception to the axiom that two parallel straight lines will never meet. "In the case of parallel lines," he says ("On Hamilton," p. 335), "the laws of perspective do present such an illusion," or semblance of exception: "they do to the eye appear to meet in both directions." He does not himself, then, attempt to maintain his own thesis; for his own thesis

was, that in order to generate the conviction self-evident necessity, there must have been freedom from all semblance of exception in past experience. And he fails entirely, therefore, in accounting for the fact that mankind regard the geometrical axiom as self-evidently necessary, while they do *not* so regard the warmth-giving property of fire.

The only answer Mr. Mill can give to this is ("On Hamilton," p. 335, note), that, as regards the axiom, the apparent exception is such that its "illusory character is at once seen, from the immediate accessibility of the evidence which disproves" it. But it is obviously undeniable that, in the case of a fire seen from out of doors, precisely the same explanation can be given. When a fire is looked at from out of doors, there is an illusory exception (no doubt) to the warmth-giving property of fire; but its "illusory character is at once seen, from the immediate accessibility of the evidence which disproves" it.

We sum up, then, this argument. If my past experience of parallel straight lines can have generated in my mind (as Mr. Mill maintains it has) a conviction that the fact of their never meeting is a self-evidently necessary truth,—then my past experience of fire would equally have generated in my mind a conviction that its warmth-giving property is a self-evidently necessary truth. That the latter supposition is mistaken Mr. Mill, of course, fully admits, it follows, therefore, that his own supposition is equally false, and that this fundamental principle of his philosophy is an error.

We added that Mr. Mahaffy has mentioned another instance of illusion, as besetting men's experience of geometrical axioms. I take a straight stick, and by manipulating it I add to the store of experience which I already possess, that a straight line is the shortest path between two points. I plunge half-way in the water this "shortest path between two points," and the said path



appears crooked. Just as when I look at a fire through the windows, I have a momentary illusion that fire does not give warmth, so on this occasion I have a momentary illusion that the shortest path between two points is crooked. The former illusion is neither stronger nor more persistent than the latter. If, therefore, my past experience have not generated in me a conviction that the warmth-giving property of fire is a self-evidently necessary truth, how can it be my past experience which has generated in me a conviction that this geometrical axiom is self-evidently necessary? Let some disciple of Mr. Mill's attempt a reply.

III. Lastly, there is more than one geometrical axiom which I have never known by experience at all; and in regard to which, therefore, it is manifestly impossible that my cognitive faculties can have been moulded by experience into its avouchment. Of this kind is the axiom which we took as our specimen, that "all trilaterals are triangular." It is not only that students had not *formulized* this truth before they met with it in their Euclid, but the great majority of them never *knew* it. Observe the contrast between this axiom on the one hand, and a truth which men really *have* known by unformulized experience on the other. The proposition was once placed before me for the first time in a formulized shape, that "horses differ greatly from each other in colour." Though (by hypothesis) I have never before expressly contemplated this proposition, I at once recognize it as expressing a fresh familiar truth; a truth vividly known to me by every day's experience. On the other hand, most of those who have not studied the elements of geometry, when first they are told that all trilaterals are triangular, as simply receive a new piece of information as they did when they heard that war had been declared between Prussia and France. But that which is received as a new piece of information cannot

possibly have been already known to them by past experience.

This last argument is indubitably valid as against Mr. Mill; because, throughout his reply to us, he fully admits that the triangularity of trilaterals is a veritable axiom—a part of the geometrical basis, and not of the geometrical superstructure. His disciples might imaginably allege that it is no axiom at all; but only a spontaneous inference, imperceptible as such by reason of its rapidity from certain genuine axioms. If they do allege this, they are called on to state what those axioms are from which the proposition could be deduced; and we entirely deny the possibility of their doing this. However, even on the supposition of their success, the two *first* arguments we gave (either of which is alone decisive) would remain unaffected.

We have now, then, made good our first reply to Mr. Mill. We have shown, we trust, conclusively, that no such experience of geometrical axioms as adults have acquired in their youth could possibly produce on their cognitive faculties any such effect as Mr. Mill's argument supposes. But we think it of immeasurably greater importance to establish against him our second reply; to establish against him the thesis, that the actual testimony of each man's existent faculties is his infallible rule of certitude, and that no legitimate appeal lies from their present to their past avouchment. We consider this thesis (as we have often said) to be of inappreciable moment. because its scope extends far beyond the mere question of mathematical axioms; and its rejection would issue by necessary consequence, in bringing down human knowledge to a level below that of the brutes. We reasoned on this head against Mr. Mill in a former essay; and our present business is merely to epitomize our former argument.

The thesis, then, which we defend, as at once so certain and so fundamental, is this: that what each man's existent

faculties actually testify is instinctively known by him as certainly true. It is by no means easy to understand, what is the adverse theory advocated by Mr. Mill. If we were to take literally some of his strange expressions quoted by us, we should understand him as maintaining a singular theory enough. We should understand him as maintaining that no declaration of a man's cognitive faculties is trustworthy, unless it be a declaration which these faculties would have uttered when he was "an infant," when he "first opened his eyes to the light"; that no argument is valid, unless it would have been recognized as valid by a new-born infant; that no avouchment of memory concerning the past may reasonably be trusted, unless the memory of a new-born infant would have safely carried him so far back. But we will do our author more justice than he has done himself, and state his proposition in a form less revolting to common sense. We will understand him, then, to mean, that it is not what my faculties actually testify that I can with reason regard as certainly true, but rather what they *would* have testified had they grown to maturity according to their own intrinsic laws of development, without being denaturalized and artificialized by that great body of experience which has accumulated round them during their long infancy. Now, it will be very useful for the purpose of our present argument, if we devise some *name* to express the human faculties in this purely imaginary condition. Let us call these the "*pure* human faculties," and the point at issue may then be stated thus. On our part, we contend that the rule of certitude is the *actual* avouchment of man's *existent* faculties; whereas Mr. Mill contends that it is the *hypothetical* avouchment of man's "*pure*" faculties.

We argue, firstly, against Mr. Mill's theory, as we have often argued before, that it lays the axe to the root of all human knowledge whatever; that, if it were sound, no

human being could know anything as certain or even as probable, except only the facts of his momentarily present consciousness. He could not *e.g.* apprehend the smallest sentence spoken to him ; for what he at this moment hears is only the *last* word of the sentence ; and how can he know what were the *earlier* words ? Indubitably, indeed, the first step (whatever it may be) which he has to take, in order to arrive at any knowledge whatever,\* is only rendered possible by his trusting the avouchment of his memory. But how could Mr. Mill consider such trust reasonable ? We say that the actual avouchment of his existent faculties—and of his memory inclusively—is instinctively known by each man as certain, but this is precisely what Mr. Mill denies.

In fact, Mr. Mill's position reminds one more of some amusing Irish bull than of grave philosophical disquisition. I encounter the familiar features of an old friend. Have I a right to regard it as certain, or even probable, that I ever saw those features before ? In other words, can I reasonably believe those past phenomena to have occurred which my memory most distinctly avouches ? The answer to this question, according to Mr. Mill, depends on the further question, whether my memory would have made the same avouchment had it not become (as Mr. Mill would say) artificialized and denaturalized. A true disciple of Mr. Mill's, then, if he is so circumstanced, will not believe that he ever saw his friend before, until he has first examined the above-named preliminary question. But how can he so much as *begin* to examine it without trusting his existent memory ? Yet it is *unreasonable*, in his view, to trust his existent memory until he has gone through that very investigation, which is impossible *without* that trust. He has no means, therefore, whatever of

\* For merely to experience the facts of his momentarily present consciousness is not to possess knowledge at all.

arriving at any reasonable trust in the avouchments of his memory; his knowledge, accordingly, is confined to the experience of his momentarily present consciousness, and is inferior to that of the very brutes.

The same argument may be exhibited in a somewhat different shape. How did Mr. Mill arrive at his theory, that his existent faculties cannot be trusted? By certain trains of reasoning. But such trains of reasoning had no meaning, except for two assumptions: (1) the assumption that logical reasoning is valid; and (2) the assumption that Mr. Mill on every occasion could trust his memory of what he had previously observed or established. But these assumptions were the most arbitrary and gratuitous of inventions, unless he had been first of all warranted in trusting his existent faculties, whether of reasoning or of memory.

We have already said that his position reminds one of what Englishmen tell as an amusing Irish bull. All the world knows the story of the Irishman, who stood in the coffee-room of a hotel, professing only to warm himself at the fire, but in reality also occupied with reading a letter which another guest was writing to a friend. The writer observing this, proceeds to add on paper: "I should express myself more fully on this matter, if there were not a black-guard in the room, looking over my shoulder at everything I write." "You insolent liar!" exclaims the self-convicted Irishman. His blunder was precisely this: that his denial of the allegation made against him was directly based on an admission of his truth. Just so Mr. Mill's denial of our thesis is directly based on his affirmation of it. His belief that it is true is the principal premiss which leads him to the conclusion that it is false.\*

\* What has been urged by us, in this and several preceding articles on the absolute necessity of assuming the veracity of memory, will be found (we think) a preservative against many false philosophies. For instance, there is

But now further. Mr. Mill's argument implies that, at all events, if it could be shown that his "pure" faculties would have declared the necessity of mathematical axioms, he would no longer deny the latter doctrine, but, on the contrary, accept it.\* Yet on what ground would it be reasonable *then* to accept it? How could he know *e.g.* that Professor Huxley's suggestion is not true? that the human faculties have not been purposely made deceptive by some mendacious creator of mankind? But this is only one of a hundred hypotheses which may most easily be imagined, all of them inconsistent with the supposition that man's "pure" faculties would be trustworthy; and on what ground would Mr. Mill be warranted in assuming that all these hypotheses are false? On what ground could he assume the proposition that (by some totally unknown law) the human faculties so proceed in their operation that—if sensible experience were only away—they would invariably declare what is objectively true? On what ground could he take for granted that, which, from his point of view, is surely a most startling proposition? *We* are under no such difficulty; because, on our view, each man knows

a philosophical tenet beginning to show itself which would deprive the human faculties of their due authority, on the ground that any given avouchment which they may put forth is but the result of certain physical antecedents *e.g.* in the nervous system. In reply, we will concede for argument's sake the fact alleged, because we maintain that no inference could be drawn from the fact such as these philosophers suppose.

If they are to escape the most flagrant and monstrous inconsistency, they must refuse to trust any given act of memory until they can know that it is not the result of physical antecedents. But they cannot even begin to inquire how far this is the case without trusting other acts of memory equally unauthenticated, and so on *ad infinitum*.

As modern philosophy proceeds, it will be seen (we predict) more and more clearly that the received Catholic doctrine on the rule of certitude is the one impregnable fortress from which every irreligious philosophy can be defeated and overthrown.

\* "The verdict of . . . our immediate and intuitive conviction is admitted on all hands to be a decision without appeal. The next question is, to what does" this intuitive conviction "bear witness?" (Mill, "On Hamilton," p. 158.)

instinctively on each occasion that his existent faculties avouch truly. Mr. Mill rejects this, the only possible foundation for human knowledge, and substitutes in its place absolutely nothing.

Such are the arguments which we expressed, against Mr. Mill's aberration on the rule of certitude. We do not, however, admit that he gives in the autobiography at all a true account of his opponents' doctrine. We cannot even understand what he means, when he says (p. 274) that they deem "intuition" to "speak with an authority higher than that of our reason:" for what is intuition except one *part* of reason? And when he accuses them (p. 226) of regarding as "intuitive every inveterate belief of which the origin is not remembered," we must, at all events, make one explanation. In our essay on "Necessary Truth," we fully admitted that "again and again inferences are so readily and imperceptibly drawn, as to be most easily mistaken for intuitions; and that we have no right of alleging aught as certainly a primary truth, without proving that it cannot be an opinion derived inferentially from experience." What those truths are which a man's existent faculties avouch, this is a matter for keen psychological investigation; and on which, without such investigation, we admit that very serious mistake is abundantly possible.

And this brings us to another matter of much importance in our controversy with Mr. Mill. He distinguishes ("Logic," vol. II. p. 441) two essentially different kinds of what he calls "complex ideas:" (1) those which *consist* of simpler ones, and (2) those which have been *generated* by simpler ones. The idea of an orange *e.g.*, he says, is complex in the former sense: it "really *consists* of the simple ideas of a certain colour, a certain form, a certain taste and smell, etc., because we can, by interrogating our consciousness, perceive all these elements in the idea." But he considers that, by a process of what he calls

"mental chemistry," some idea may *result* from the combination of certain past ideas, which idea, nevertheless, in its *present state* is incapable of analysis. Whether the fact be so, is a very interesting psychological question, on which we need not here attempt to pronounce. But, as a matter of language, we should call such ideas (if they exist) "simple," not "complex." And as a matter of philosophy, we should confidently deny that the question here raised by Mr. Mill can give any help in deciding what it is which man's existent faculties testify.

We shall best illustrate what we here mean, by reverting to a former discussion of ours with Mr. Mill, on the foundation of morality. We devoted some pages of that essay to establish the conclusion that the idea "morally good" is perfectly simple: and then, from that conclusion, we drew the further inference that certain moral truths are self-evidently necessary. Mr. Mill's reply to that argument would probably be (see "Logic," vol. II. p. 443, note), that the idea "morally good" is *not* perfectly simple, because, though it does not *consist* of simpler ideas, it was originally *generated* by such. In company with Mr. Hutton, we entirely deny that such can possibly have been the case, as we stated. But what we are here pointing out is, that such an allegation is utterly irrelevant. Let it once be admitted that, so far as the *existent human* faculties are concerned, "morally good" is an idea incapable of analysis; the conclusion inevitably follows (as we showed in the essay) that the existent human faculties declare certain moral truths to be self-evidently necessary. But it is what his faculties *do* declare—not what under imaginary circumstances they *would* declare—which alone is known by each man to be infallibly true.

Our present business is not with Mr. Herbert Spencer; but we may mention, by the way, that (if we rightly understand his various statements) his distrust of the human



existent faculties exceeds even Mr. Mill's. He will not even accept, as certainly true, what he admits that his "pure" faculties would unmistakably declare, because he considers that he may *inherit* faculties which have been denaturalized and artificialized by *ancestral* experience. Our whole answer to Mr. Mill contains *a fortiori* an answer to Mr. Spencer.\* And it is no small testimony to the strength of Theistic philosophy, that its two ablest assailants in our time have been driven to take refuge in different phases of a theory so manifestly absurd and self-contradictory.

Here, then, we close what is necessarily our final reply to Mr. Mill, on what we have called the keystone of his "aggressive" philosophical position; viz. his respective doctrines on mathematical axioms and on the rule of certitude. In our last essay we treated these two questions in their logical order, and commenced with the latter: whereas, on the present occasion, for the sake of varying our treatment, we have proceeded inversely; we have traced back our difference from him on mathematical axioms, to our difference from him on the rule of certitude. We will sum up under five questions, and so (we hope) give our readers an intelligible conspectus of the whole.

Question 1st. Do the existent human faculties pronounce that mathematical axioms are self-evidently necessary? We reply most confidently in the affirmative, and Mr. Mill, if we may judge from his autobiography, does not himself venture to answer this question in the negative.

Question 2nd. Can this avouchment of the human faculties have been produced by the mere agency of past experience? We answer confidently in the negative; Mr. Mill confidently in the affirmative.

\* We would refer our readers to a masterly article on Mr. Spencer in the *Quarterly* of October, 1874. We heartily concur with it from first to last, except, indeed, that its eulogy of Mr. Spencer's *ability* seems to us a little beyond the mark. Mr. Spencer's reply to it in the *Fortnightly* of December entirely misses its point.

Question 3rd. Supposing that the said avouchment *could* have been thus produced, would this circumstance afford any justification for doubting its certain truth? Mr. Mill answers this question in the affirmative; we in the negative. We maintain that the avouchment of each man's existent faculties is his one infallible rule of certitude, and that a denial of this truth would degrade his knowledge to a level below that of the brutes.

Question 4th. Mr. Mill implies that he accepts, as certainly true, whatever his faculties *would* have declared, had they not been denaturalized and artificialized by past experience. Does he give any reason for this opinion? None whatever. He is wholly silent on the motive of certitude.

Question 5th. What ground do we give for our own doctrine, that whatever any man's existent faculties avouch is known by him as certainly true? We allege that in each separate case this is known instinctively: and we give, as our illustration of the term "instinctive," the keen and instinctive certitude with which each man knows himself to have experienced what his memory clearly and vividly testifies.

We have been speaking on necessary truth in general, and on the self-evident necessity of mathematical axioms in particular. One or two further questions had better be considered before we finally turn from this matter, though Mr. Mill is not directly concerned with them.

I. One of these has been suggested to us by a non-Catholic correspondent. He objects altogether to our taking mathematical axioms as a sample of what we allege about necessary truths in general. "Lines and angles," he argues, are but imagined by geometricians. No fair parallel can be made (he thinks) between such mere notions on one hand, and facts on the other hand, such *e.g.* as

human actions, which have a real objective existence. Our correspondent does not deny that there *are* various hypothetically necessary truths concerning these imaginary lines and angles; but he denies that this furnishes any kind of presumption, or even illustration, in favour of there being *e.g.* a necessary morality in human actions. He is well aware that on this matter he has Mr. Mill for his opponent, no less than ourselves; and, in fact, we could answer him at every point without going further for materials than Mr. Mill's "Logic." Mr. Mill holds, that every true proposition concerning angles and lines represents real objective truth. We will not, however, here draw out Mr. Mill's (to our mind) conclusive argument for this opinion; because to do so would carry us a great deal too far. We content ourselves with three replies, either of which by itself appears to us decisive.

Firstly, we point to arithmetical truths. Let there be 16 rows of pebbles, each containing 18. it is a necessary truth that the whole number is 288. Omnipotence could divide one pebble into two, or create new pebbles; but it is beyond the sphere of Omnipotence to effect that, so long as there remain 16 rows of 18 pebbles each, the whole number of pebbles should be either more or less than the sum of two hundreds eight tens and eight units. Is not this an external objective fact, if there be any such in the world? And the number of such arithmetical facts is simply inexhaustible. Then, secondly, take the theorems—inexhaustible in number—of solid geometry. Omnipotence *e.g.* can make a perfectly accurate parallelopiped: but it cannot make one which shall not possess all the properties proved by geometers. And, thirdly, every proposition which concerns *areas* may be most easily converted into a proposition of solid geometry.\* Even then, if it were true that

\* Here is one instance of what we mean. Take a right-angled triangle, and erect squares on all the sides as in Euclid I. 47. Suppose this figure to

lines and angles are mere geometrical notions, there remains an inexhaustible number of mathematical propositions which indubitably concern objective and external facts. All these possess the attribute of necessity, and they may very fairly be made samples of *other* necessary truths which also concern objective external facts.

II. We now pass to an objection, which may imaginably be made from an entirely different quarter, though no such objection has happened to come within our knowledge. On this, as on other occasions, we have often given, as a special explanation of the term "necessary," that the reversal of a necessary truth is external to the sphere of Omnipotence. It is possible that here and there some Catholic may have been startled by this expression, as though it implied some disparagement of God's Attributes.

Now, since a very few words will suffice to remove any such misapprehension, those few words had better be inserted.

On a former occasion we laid down the following proposition, 'as that for which in due time we shall contend. We contend, with FF. Kleutgen and Liberatore, that all necessary truths are founded on God's Essence; that they are what they are, because He is what He is. Let us suppose, then, any Catholic to make the objection we suggested above. We would ask him whether there is any disparagement to God's Attributes in saying that He cannot destroy Himself; that the destruction of God is external to the sphere of Omnipotence. On the contrary, he will answer, God's Attributes *would* be intolerably disparaged if He were *not* accounted Indestructible: Existence is involved in His Essence. Secondly, we would

move parallelly with itself, and a solid figure is of course the result. Omnipotence can create such a solid figure with perfect accuracy, but Omnipotence cannot effect that the portion of it generated by the square of the hypotenuse shall be either greater or less than the sum of those two portions generated by the squares of the sides

ask, whether there is any disparagement of God's Attributes, in saying that He cannot change His Nature; that He cannot make Himself *e.g.* mendacious, unjust, unfaithful to promises. On the contrary, the Immutability of His Nature is perhaps what is in my mind more than anything else, when I speak of His Greatness. But if He cannot change His Nature, it follows that He cannot change what is *founded* on His Nature; that He cannot change necessary truths. In saying, then, that the reversal of a necessary truth is external to the sphere of Omnipotence,—so far from disparaging God's Attributes, we are extolling the Immutability of His Nature.

III. We must preface our next inquiry by a short preliminary statement. It is alleged by various phenomenists, that there are no ideas in the mind, except copies in various combinations of what has been cognized by the senses.\* We need hardly say how intensely we deny this, though we are not here considering the question at any length. Take *e.g.* the idea "morally good." We have maintained in a former essay that it is perfectly simple; and that perhaps no other idea can be named so constantly recurring in one or other shape. Here we may add, that there is no idea possessing more special characteristics of its own, more readily and vividly cognizable; while most certainly it is no copy, or combination of copies, of anything experienced by the senses.† In a future essay we

\* This is not, however, Mr. Mill's opinion, for (not to mention other exceptions he would make) we have already recounted his doctrine, that many an idea is generated by "mental chemistry" from other ideas, which nevertheless does not consist of those ideas, nor is now any combination of them.

† The following passage from F. Kleutgen's work on the scholastic philosophy will illustrate our meaning. We translate it from the French translation. The author is assailing the doctrine of innate ideas —

"But," it will be said, "should we be able, on sight of an individual action, to conceive a maxim of morality, if we did not possess already certain notions relative to the moral order? Assuredly no . . . But are we at liberty thence to infer that the mind finds in itself as *innate* those earlier ideas, or else that it must have received them from some external source [*d'ailleurs*]? Not at

hope to defend a similar proposition, in regard to the idea "cause;" and in like manner the idea "necessary" is certainly no copy, or combination of copies, of anything cognized by the senses.

The question for which we have been preparing the way is (as far as we see) of no practical importance, but for the sake of clearness, it may be worth while briefly to enter on it. Is the idea "necessary" a simple or complex idea? We suggested on a former occasion that it is complex, and that a "necessary" truth precisely means a truth "of which there is no *cause*." Subsequent reflection has induced us to doubt the truth of this suggestion; and has inclined us to the opinion that the idea "necessary" admits no such analysis, and is, in fact, altogether simple. Take the proposition, "every necessary truth is uncaused." Is this a purely explicative proposition? Does the word "uncaused" merely express what was already in my mind when I used the word "necessary?" or, on the contrary, does it add something to the former idea? If our reader gives the former answer, he holds the opinion which we suggested in the essay we have referred to; if he gives the latter answer, he holds the opinion to which we now rather incline.

We now pass to what we have called the keystone of Mr. Mill's "affirmative" position. His whole positive doctrine from first to last depends on the proposition, that the uniformity of nature can be proved by experience. We did not deny that this uniformity could be proved by introducing premisses of that kind which Mr. Mill rejects; but we denied that it can be proved (as he is required on *his*

all, for it is sufficient that the mind possesses, besides sensibility, a higher power of knowledge, reason. As we perceive in the object, by means of the senses, those phenomena which correspond to the nature of the senses, so we know, by the reason, that which is exclusively within the sphere of that faculty" (Diss 1 n 643)

principles to prove it) from experienced phenomena alone. In the new edition of his "Logic" Mr. Mill replies to our criticisms (vol. ii. pp. 109-111); and what we have now to do is to rejoin on his reply.

"All physical science," we said, "depends for its existence on the fundamental proposition, that the laws of nature are uniform:" by which proposition "we mean, that no physical phenomenon takes place without a corresponding physical antecedent, and that the same physical antecedent is invariably followed by the same physical consequent." Mr. Mill professes to establish conclusively, on mere grounds of experience, that such is the fact, at all events, throughout the whole of this planet. ("Logic," book iii. chap. 21) "His reasoning," we said, "amounts at best to this. If in any part of the world there existed a breach in the uniformity of nature, that breach must by this time have been discovered by one or other of the eminent men who have given themselves to physical experiment. But most certainly, adds Mr. Mill, none such has been discovered, or mankind would be sure to have heard of it, consequently, such is his conclusion, none such exists." Mr. Mill tacitly admits that we have stated his argument quite correctly. We, then, thus proceeded.—

Now, in order to estimate the force of this argument, let us suppose for a moment that the fact were as Mr. Mill represents it, let us suppose for a moment that persons of scientific education were unanimous in holding that there has been no well-authenticated case of a breach in the uniformity of nature. What *inference* could be drawn from this? Be it observed, that the number of natural agents constantly at work is incalculably large, and that the observed cases of uniformity in their action must be immeasurably fewer than one-thousandth of the whole. Scientific men, we assume for the moment, have discovered that in a certain proportion of instances—immeasurably fewer than one-thousandth of the whole—a certain fact has prevailed, the fact of uniformity, and they have not found a

single instance in which that fact does not prevail. Are they justified, we ask, in inferring from these premisses that the fact is *universal*? Surely the question answers itself. Let us make a very grotesque supposition, in which, however, the conclusion would really be tried according to the arguments adduced. In some desert of Africa there is an enormous connected edifice, surrounding some vast space, in which dwell certain reasonable beings who are unable to leave the enclosure. In this edifice are more than a thousand chambers, which some years ago were entirely locked up, and the keys no one knew where. By constant diligence twenty-five keys have been found, out of the whole number, and the corresponding chambers, situated promiscuously throughout the edifice, have been opened. Each chamber, when examined, is found to be in the precise shape of a dodecahedron. Are the inhabitants justified, on that account, in holding with certitude that the remaining 975 chambers are built on the same plan?

Mr. Mill frankly replies —

Not with perfect certitude, but . . . with so high a degree of probability that they would be justified in acting upon the presumption until an exception appeared.

This we, of course, quite admit; but it falls very far short of Mr. Mill's thesis, and he therefore thus proceeds —

Dr. Ward's argument, however, does not touch mine as it stands in the text. My argument is grounded on the fact that the uniformity of the course of nature as a whole, is constituted by the uniform sequences of special effects from special natural agencies, that the number of these natural agencies in the part of the universe known to us is not incalculable, nor even extremely great, that we have now reason to think that at least the far greater number of them, if not separately, at least in some of the combinations into which they enter, have been made sufficiently amenable to observation, to have enabled us actually to ascertain some of their fixed laws; and that this amount of experience justifies the same degree of assurance that the course of nature is uniform throughout, which we previously had of the uniformity of sequence among the phenomena best known to us. This view of the subject, if correct, destroys the force of Dr. Ward's first argument.



We do not see, on the contrary, how it touches our argument ever so faintly. Mr. Mill accounts it to be proved by experience that certain "natural agencies" produce certain "special effects." We totally deny that this has been proved, or that it *can* be proved, -on mere grounds of experience. There are none of these natural agencies which can be cited more favourably for Mr. Mill's purpose than that of gravitation. We ask, then, this simple question: How could Mr. Mill show, by mere experience, that particles throughout the earth (and universe) attract each other in that particular way which is spoken of as "the law of gravitation?" What we said on that general truth the uniformity of nature, we say equally on that particular truth the law of gravitation. The number of particles of matter in the universe is incalculably large, and the observed cases of their acting according to the law of gravitation must be immeasurably fewer than one-thousandth part of the whole. Scientific men have discovered that in a certain proportion of instances—immeasurably fewer than one-thousandth of the whole—a certain fact has prevailed, the fact of gravitation; and they have not found a single instance in which that fact does not prevail. Are they justified, we ask, in inferring from these premisses that the fact is certainly universal? Why, Mr. Mill has already answered in the negative a question precisely equivalent. The very same reasoning which showed how impossible it is to prove by experience the uniformity of nature in general, shows equally how impossible it is to prove by experience the law of gravitation in particular. And the same remark is applicable to all the other "natural agencies" which Mr. Mill commemorates. His attempted answer only avails to exhibit, more pointedly than it might have been seen before, the extraordinary weakness of his case.

Our second argument was the following:—

But, secondly, it is as far as possible from being true that men of scientific education are unanimous in holding that there has been no well-authenticated case of breach in the uniformity of nature. On the contrary, even to this day the majority of such persons believe in Christianity, and hold the miracles revealed in Scripture to be on the whole accurately reported. The majority of scientific men believe that at one time persons on whom the shadow of Peter passed were thereby freed from their infirmities; and that at another time garments brought from the body of Paul expelled sickness and demoniacal possession. (Acts v. 15, xix 12) Will Mr Mill allege that S Peter's shadow, or that garments from S Paul's body, were the *physical cause* of a cure, as lotions and bandages might be? Of course not. Here, then, is a series of physical phenomena, resulting without physical cause, and Catholics to this day consider that breaches in the uniformity of nature are matters of every-day occurrence. Even then, if it were true—it seems to us (as we have already said) most untrue—that Mr Mill's conclusion legitimately follows from his premisses, still he cannot even approximate to *establishing* those premisses until he have first disproved Catholicity and next disproved the whole truth of Christianity.

Mr. Mill thus replies, the italics being his own :—

Dr Ward's second argument is, that many or most persons, both scientific and unscientific, believe that there are well-authenticated cases of breach in the uniformity of nature, namely miracles. Neither does this consideration touch what I have said in the text. I admit no other uniformity in the events of nature than the law of Causation, and (as I have explained in the chapter of this volume which treats of the Grounds of Disbelief) a miracle is no exception to that law. In every case of alleged miracle, a *new antecedent* is affirmed to exist, a *counteracting cause*, namely the volition of a supernatural being. To all, therefore, to whom beings with superhuman power over nature are a *vera causa*, a miracle is a case of the Law of Universal Causation, not a deviation from it.

What an astonishing collapse is here both of memory and of scientific intelligence! Firstly, of memory. Nothing can be more express than Mr. Mill's words, where he is first occupied with setting forth the uniformity of nature.

"When in the course of this inquiry," he says ("Logic," vol. 1. p. 376), "I speak of the cause of any phenomenon, I do not mean a cause which is not itself a phenomenon . . . the causes with which I concern myself are not efficient but physical causes. . . . Between the *phenomena* which exist at any moment and the *phenomena* which exist at the succeeding instant there is an invariable order of succession." Is a volition, then, of the Invisible God a *phenomenon*? Mr. Mill laid down at starting, that he recognizes no causes which are not phenomena; and now he tells us that *God's volition* may count as a cause

Secondly, what a collapse of scientific intelligence! Mr. Mill professes to lay down a doctrine on the uniformity of nature,\* which shall suffice as a reasonable basis for physical and other science. Yet what is the view he now professes? He now advocates no doctrine inconsistent with the supposition that there may be as many deities on Olympus as Homer himself believed in; and that each one of these deities is arbitrarily interfering with the course of nature every minute of every day. In all these cases "the volition of a supernatural being" might count as "a new antecedent," a "counteracting cause:" so that every arbitrary and irregular phenomenon so brought about "is a case of the law of universal causation," as he says, and "not a *deviation* from it." Why, it is plain that if such constant interference took place, there would be no "course of nature," nor what he ordinarily calls "causation," at all, and physical science would vanish from the sphere of human knowledge. In other words, if we are to trust his present language, he does not profess to prove that there is any uniformity of nature whatever, or that physical science can reasonably exist.†

\* He calls it "the law of universal causation," but we cannot ourselves use this term, because of the vital difference with Mr. Mill on "causation," which we are to set forth in a future essay

† It may most fairly be asked, how belief in the Christian miracles is

It is quite true (as Mr. Mill implies in the words we have quoted) that, in his comment on Hume's argument against miracles, he had made the very same blunder which he now repeats. We have always attributed the former blunder to the same cause, to which we also attribute the one before us. Mr. Mill, we think, held so disparaging an estimate of the philosophy which admits the existence of miracles, that in dealing with it he was satisfied with the first plausible argument which came to hand, and did not trouble himself to examine its merits very closely.

We further adduced a third argument:—

But the strongest objection against the sufficiency of Mr. Mill's argument still remains to be stated. "All our interest," says Mr. Bain most truly, "is concentrated on *what is yet to be*; the present and the past are of value only as a clue to the events *that are to come*." Let us even suppose, then, for argument's sake that Mr. Mill had fully proved the past and present uniformity of nature, still the main difficulty would continue, viz how he proposes to show that such uniformity will last one moment beyond the present. It is quite an elementary remark that, whenever a proposition is grounded on mere experience, nothing whatever can be known or even guessed concerning its truth, except within the reach of possible observation. For this very reason Mr. Mill professes himself unable to know, or even to assign any kind of probability to the supposition that nature proceeds on uniform laws in distant stellar regions. But plainly there are conditions of *time*, as well as of *space*, which preclude the possibility of observation, and it is as simply impossible for men to know from mere experience what will take place on earth to-morrow, as to know from mere experience what takes place in the planet Jupiter to-day.

Here is Mr. Mill's reply, with his own italics:—

Dr. Ward's last and, as he says, strongest argument is the familiar one of Reid, Stewart, and their followers—that whatever knowledge experience gives us of the past and present, it gives us none of the future. I confess that I see no force consistent with belief in the existence of physical science. We answered this question, however, directly and expressly in our essay "*Science, Prayer, and Miracles*," (vol. II. of this collection)

whatever in this argument. Wherein does a future fact differ from a present or a past fact, except in their merely momentary relation to the human beings at present in existence? The answer made by Priestly, in his examination of Reid, seems to me sufficient, viz that though we have had no experience of what *is* future, we have had abundant experience of what *was* future. The "leap in the dark" (as Professor Bain calls it) from the past to the future is exactly as much in the dark, and no more, as the leap from a past which we have personally observed to a past which we have not. I agree with Mr. Bain in the opinion that the resemblance of what we have not experienced to what we have is, by a law of our nature, presumed through the mere energy of the idea before experience has proved it. This *psychological* truth, however, is not, as Dr. Ward, when criticizing Mr. Bain, appears to think, inconsistent with the *logical* truth that experience does prove it. The proof comes after the presumption, and consists in its invariable *verification* by experience when the experience arrives. The fact which while it was future could not be observed, having as yet no existence, is always, when it becomes present and can be observed, found conformable to the past.

This rejoinder is more surprising than even the two former. Any one who attentively peruses it will see that it comes to this. We say that, on Mr. Mill's theory, no one, during the year 1874, has any solid ground whatever for supposing as even probable, that fire will burn or water will quench thirst in the year 1875. Mr. Mill replies, that at the end of 1875 he *will* have ground for knowing that such *has* been the case during that past year. Dr. Bain says very truly, that "the present and past are of value only as a clue to" the future; and we argued that, on Mr. Mill's theory, they are no clue whatever to the future. That is true, replies Mr. Mill, but still what is now future will be known as soon as it shall have become past. Let us observe what comes of this. We find from his autobiography that "the principal outward purpose of his life" (p. 67) was so to act on mankind through the laws of human nature, that various intellectual, political, and social

results might ensue, which he regarded as ameliorations of unspeakable moment. Nevertheless—according to the very principles which he accounted to be essentially involved in such amelioration—he had no ground whatever, at any one moment, for thinking it (we will not say certain, but) ever so faintly probable, that the laws of human nature were in future to continue the same. And yet if they did *not* continue the same, his whole life would have been one sustained blunder.

We made one final comment on Mr. Mill's treatment of these subjects, which he has left entirely unnoticed.

In considering the question "on what grounds we expect that the sun will rise to-morrow," Mr. Mill (*"Logic,"* vol. II. p. 80) falls into a mistake very unusual with him, for he totally misapprehends the difficulty which he has to encounter. He argues—we think quite successfully—that there is a probability amounting to practical certainty that the sun will rise to-morrow, *on the hypothesis that the uniformity of nature so long continues*. But the question he has to face is, what reason can he have for knowing, or even guessing, that the uniformity of nature *will* so long continue? And to this, the true question at issue, he does not so much as attempt a reply.

Nothing, then, can be more conspicuous and undeniable than Mr. Mill's break-down in what is the one keystone of his "affirmative" philosophical position. He professes to build a philosophy on the exclusive basis of experience; and he heartily admits that such construction is impossible, unless the philosopher first establishes the uniformity of nature. But if he establishes that truth on some *other* basis than experience, he does *not* build his philosophy on the exclusive basis of experience. Mr. Mill, then, is required by his principles to prove the uniformity of nature from the mere facts of experience; and we have now seen how pitiably he fails in his attempt. We are very confident that where he has failed no other phenomenist will succeed; but if any one makes the attempt, we promise

beforehand to meet him straightforwardly and publicly. Meanwhile, we consider ourselves to have shown, that nothing, at all events, can be more ignominious than Mr. Mill's philosophical position, whether on its "aggressive" side or its "affirmative."

The paper of ours to which Mr. Mill replied, was followed by another on "the foundation of morality." In our next essay we hope to supplement that paper by one encountering him in full detail on that most vital theme, his denial of freewill.

## VI.

### MR. MILL'S DENIAL OF FREEWILL.\*

ON the present occasion our contention against Mr. Mill will be purely psychological, though connected, of course, with most important metaphysical questions, such as morality and again causation. On every question between intuitionists and phenomenists, we consider Mr. Mill by far our ablest opponent, as we have often said. But on the particular theme now before us, he is pre-eminently the most suitable champion we could assail; for "the theory of volition and of responsibility," says its advocate in the *Westminster Review* (Oct. 1873, p. 305), which was "first stated in this country by Hobbes," "is now associated most closely with the name of Mr. J. S. Mill." In addition, however, to the two works in which Mr. Mill treats this theme, we have also named at the head of our essay Dr. Bain's well-known treatise, which is identical in doctrine with Mr. Mill's volumes. And in our present essay we propose to join issue with Mr. Mill on a mere question of fact, in regard to experienced phenomena. He holds, "as a truth of experience," "that volitions do in fact follow determinate moral antecedents, with the same

\* *Examination of Sir W. Hamilton's Philosophy* By JOHN STUART MILL. Fourth Edition London Longmans.

*A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive.* By JOHN STUART MILL. Eighth Edition London Longmans.

*The Emotions and the Will.* By ALEXANDER BAIN London J. W. Parker



uniformity and the same certainty as physical effects follow their physical causes:" these moral antecedents being "desires, occasions, habits, and dispositions, combined with outward circumstances suitable to call those internal incentives into action" ("On Hamilton," pp. 576, 577). He maintains, that if we knew any given "person thoroughly, and knew all the inducements which are acting on him, we could foretell his conduct with as much certainty as we can predict any physical event" ("Logic," vol. II. p. 422). This doctrine has commonly been called "the doctrine of philosophical necessity," and we think the name a very suitable one. Mr. Mill, however, prefers the name "determinism;" and in this he apparently accords with the great body of his fellow-thinkers: by all means, therefore, so let it be.

For ourselves, as we have already implied, we shall not attempt in our present article to establish the full doctrine of Freewill; because this cannot be done until we have treated "causation," as we hope to do in the next essay of our series.\* On the present occasion we shall content ourselves with disproving (as we consider) the psychical fact which Mr. Mill alleges. He calls his theory "determinism;" and we will call our own, therefore, by the name of "indeterminism." The full doctrine of Freewill includes, indeed, the doctrine of indeterminism; but it includes also a certain doctrine on the causation of human acts, which we do not here profess to establish.

It is always of pre-eminent importance in controversy to understand rightly the position of one's opponent, but on no other question (we think) is this so necessary as on the present. We will beg, therefore, our readers' most careful attention, while we draw out what we apprehend to

\* It is an inconvenience in philosophical controversy, that not unfrequently some particular theme has to be treated piecemeal, in order that nothing may be assumed without proof. It would have been indefinitely more inconvenient if we had attempted to treat causation before we had dealt with determinism.

be Mr. Mill's theory, at a length which to them may possibly appear tedious and superfluous. As we proceed, we will cite in footnotes illustrative passages from Mr. Mill himself and from Dr. Bain. The determinist, then, may be supposed to express himself as follows:—

"By the term 'motive' I understand the desire of some pleasure which may be gained, or the aversion to some pain which may be prevented, by some given course of action.\* For the sake of greater compendiousness, indeed, I will call the avoidance of pain a negative pleasure, and I can then omit the second part of the above definition. When a man in a boat sees the approach of a storm, and rows to save his life, his *motive* is his desiring that *negative pleasure*, the escape from death.

"If any motive at any moment acted alone, it would as a matter of course be followed by action in the indicated direction. But almost always conflicting motives are at work; or, in other words, the pleasure desired is seen to be unattainable, except with some concomitant pain. Even a flower cannot be plucked without the trouble of stooping. But in many cases there are powerful conflicting motives in several different directions. If I enter on course A, I shall certainly or probably derive pleasure M, but on the other hand, I shall certainly or probably endure pain N: while at the same time, by pursuing course A, I shall be prevented from pursuing course B, or pursuing it at least with equal diligence; which said course B offers special pleasures of its own, though these of course accompanied with its own pains,—and so on indefinitely. Under these circumstances, an illustration of my position may be derived from mechanics.

\* "A motive, being a desire or an aversion, is proportional to the pleasantness as conceived by us of the thing desired, or the harmfulness of the thing shunned." ("On Hamilton," p 605) So Dr Bain "Various motives—present or prospective pleasures and pains—concur in urging us to act" (p 550).

A certain physical point, possessing certain intrinsic qualities, is solicited at this moment by several attracting forces : such being the case, it moves definitely and decisively ; not perhaps in the direction of any one force, but at all events in a direction resulting from the joint influence of all. The conflicting motives which act on my will are analogous to the conflicting forces which act on the physical point ; and my will commonly under these circumstances moves definitely and decisively, not perhaps in the exact direction of any one motive, but at all events in the direction which results from the joint influence of them all.\* From time to time, no doubt, there are pauses for deliberation ; and there are cases, also, in which there exists for a while much vacillation and (as one may say) vibration of the will. I will expound these cases presently. But in the enormous majority of instances—even where there are powerful motives acting on some side which does not prevail—there is no such vacillation at all, but one definite and decisive resultant. Take as an instance, the demeanour in battle of some brave soldier. He is stimulated by many impelling motives : by a certain savage pleasure in aggressiveness, which is partly natural and is partly due to past habit ; by desire of his country's success ; by zeal, perhaps, for the cause in which his country is engaged ; by desire of his countrymen's and of the world's applause ; by repugnance to the infamy which would follow a display of cowardice, etc. Yet the motives are in themselves extremely

\* Determinists "affirm as a truth of experience that volitions do, in point of fact, follow determinate moral antecedents, with the same uniformity and with the same certainty as physical effects follow their physical causes. These moral antecedents are desires, aversions, habits, and dispositions, combined with outward circumstances suited to call these internal incentives into action. All these again are effects of causes ; those of them which are mental being consequences of education and of other moral and physical influences " ("On Hamilton," pp 576, 577) So Dr Bain says in effect that the will's act is in every case determined by "the operation of the motive forces of pleasurable and painful sensibility, coupled with the mental spontaneity of the system " (p 553)

strong which solicit him in the opposite direction. He is vividly conscious (even though implicitly) of the danger to which he is exposed; of the fearful suffering, and death itself, which may not improbably befall him; he remembers his wife and children whom he has left at home, and the doubt whether he shall ever be with them again; he has seen, perhaps, his dear friend shot dead by his side, and would be glad to have some brief time for the indulgence of grief, the whole scene around him is ghastly and repulsive in the extreme. Yet in the teeth of these repelling considerations, there is not one moment's faltering or hesitation: the antagonistic motives are as nothing when conflicting with those which stir him to action. Or take a son, passionately devoted to his mother and tending her in her old age. In vain he is solicited by this, that, and the other antagonistic gratification: the one master passion overbears all other motives, promptly and without a struggle. And so, if you look at the lives of men in general, you will find that, during very far the greater part of their existence, they are pursuing without hesitation one very definite line of conduct, though there is many a motive simultaneously present, which by itself has a very strong tendency to divert them from their course.

"Here I can explain what I mean by the *power* of a motive: I mean its tendency to influence this or that man's conduct, at this or that particular instant, by means of the pleasure which it proposes. That assemblage of motives, which influences the heroic soldier or the passionately loving son in one direction, is indefinitely 'more powerful,' 'stronger'—or, in other words, indefinitely more suggestive of positive or negative pleasure—than that which influences him in the other.\* Here, however, I must make two

\* "Various motives—present or prospective pleasures and pains—concur in urging me to act the result of the conflict shows that one group is stronger than another, and that is the whole case." (Bain, p 550) "It is only an identical proposition to affirm that the greatest of two pleasures, or

explanations, to prevent very serious misconception of my meaning.

"Firstly. The natural difference of character among men is enormous; and this enormous difference is enormously increased by difference of education and of past life. That which may be a most powerful motive to one man, will be a very weak one to another, and an actual cause of repulsion to a third. Nay, so moody and changeable is human nature, not only at different periods of his life, but even at different moments of the same day the same object is desired by the same man with very varying degrees of intensity. This is partly caused, indeed, by the fact that the nervous and muscular systems are so very differently affected at different instants; so that the very same object is indefinitely more attractive at one instant than at another.\* Nor, again, is there any more common phenomenon than that a man's desire of some immediate gratification is indefinitely stronger at the moment than his desire of what he well knows to be far more to his permanent welfare; or, in other words, that the thought of enjoying such gratification is at the moment far more suggestive to him of pleasure than is the thought of promoting his own permanent welfare.

what appears such, sways the resulting action, for it is the resulting action that alone determines which is the greater" (Ibid p 447) Mr Mill is express on this point "Those who say that the will follows the strongest motive, do not mean the motive which is strongest in relation to the will, or, in other words, that the will follows what it does follow. They mean the motive which is strongest in relation to pain and pleasure, since a motive, being a desire or aversion, is proportional to the pleasantness as conceived by us of the thing desired, or the painfulness of the thing shunned" ("On Hamilton," p 605) There is another passage of Mr Mill's, which may be cited as illustrating his doctrine in another point of view "I dispute altogether that we are conscious of being able to act in opposition to the strongest present desire or aversion. The difference between a bad and a good man is not that the latter acts in opposition to his strongest desire: it is, that his desire to do right and his aversion to doing wrong are strong enough to overcome—and in the case of perfect virtue to silence—any other desire or aversion which may conflict with them." (Ibid p 585) What is conscience, he elsewhere asks, except a desire—"the desire to do right?" (Ibid p 583)

\* Bain, p. 442, and elsewhere

"Secondly. Very prominently under the head of 'pain' ranks 'difficulty': such difficulty, *e.g.*, as accompanies any attempt at breaking through a firmly established habit. Suppose, *e.g.*, I have established a very firm habit of early rising. When the proper moment comes, very strong motives on the other side are spontaneously and at once counterbalanced by the difficulty of breaking through my habit. And similar phenomena are by no means confined to the case of habits. As one of a thousand instances, there is a very strong impulse with some men to throw themselves down a precipice if they are standing close to its edge, an impulse which it requires powerful effort to withstand. I am not, of course, taking a case where the man's head becomes so dizzy that he loses his power of remaining on the cliff. I am supposing a man with full power over his actions, but conscious of this strange and eccentric impulse. This impulse then acts as a strong motive: and yet it cannot in any obvious sense of the words be called either a desire of pleasure or an aversion of pain. In fact, however, it is the latter. There is very great difficulty—*i.e.* 'pain'—in resisting his natural tendency to throw himself down, and strong motives on the other side are required to counterbalance this difficulty.\*

\* The following passage from Mr Mill's "Logic" deserves very careful attention —

"As we proceed in the formation of habits and become accustomed to will a particular act or a particular course of conduct because it is pleasurable, we at last continue to will it without any reference to its being pleasurable. Although, from some change in us or in our circumstances, we have ceased to find any pleasure in the action, or perhaps to anticipate any pleasure in consequence of it, we still continue to desire the action, and consequently to do it. In this manner it is that habits of hurtful excess continue to be practised although they have ceased to be pleasurable; and in this manner also it is that the willingness to persevere in the course which he has chosen does not desert the moral hero, even when the reward, however real, which he doubtless receives from the consciousness of well-doing, is anything but an equivalent for the sufferings he may undergo or the wishes which he may have to renounce" (vol. II. p. 488, 489).

The last clause of this sentence, if regard be had to its *rhetoric*, is one of the numerous passages in Mr Mill's works which imply a theory on morals

"I have hitherto considered that great majority of instances in which conflicting motives issue in a definite and decisive resultant. But I admitted at starting that this is not always the case. Sometimes, *e g.*, there occurs a pause for deliberation. But what more easily explicable than this on my theory? The person pauses that he may more fully understand the full nature and consequences of proposed alternatives, before deciding which he prefers. You will say perhaps that he sometimes pauses in order to consider whether some action to which he is attracted be consistent with morality; and I admit this. But, then, this very fact implies that his desire of performing that action is not so strong as his desire of acting in accordance with morality.\*

"So much on the particular case of *pausing*. Other indefinitely truer and nobler than that in which he philosophically acquiesced. But its *logical* meaning is made obvious by the earlier clause "Habits of hurtful excess continue to be practised, although they have ceased to be pleasurable," simply because their abandonment is so intensely painful. In like manner, then, according to Mr Mill, the difficulty of acting in opposition to a strongly formed virtuous habit affords a motive which will often counterbalance very strong adverse solicitations. We may add that there are passages similar to the above in his work "On Hamilton," in pp 588, 589, and in p 605

As to such other impulses as those mentioned in the text, Dr Bain draws especial attention to them (p 433). Singularly enough, he adds that they "are cases of action where we cannot discover any connection between pleasure enjoyed or pain averted, and the energy of active devotion made manifest," a statement which seems at first sight to subvert his whole theory. He says, however, that "we must look for the explanation of this influence, which traverses the proper course of volition, in the undue or morbid persistency of certain ideas in the mind." In various parts of his works, Dr Bain lays stress on these "fixed ideas," and it is by no means easy to see how he reconciles his language concerning them with his general theory. One mode of doing so is that given in the text. In some passages he seems to imply a different explanation, viz that these fixed ideas imply a certain mild form of quasi-insanity, and that acts done under their influence are not properly volitions. We see no reason for pursuing further this inquiry, because our reader will see clearly, as we proceed, that it can in no way affect our own argument.

\* "If I elect to abstain" from murder, "in what sense am I conscious that I could have elected to commit the crime? Only if I had desired to commit it with a desire stronger than my horror of murder, not with one less strong" (Mill, "On Hamilton," p 583)

cases, again, no doubt exist, exemplifying what I have called vacillation and vibration of will. The devoted son, *e.g.* whom I just now mentioned, may fall in love, and there will at times be much vacillation and vibration between his respective desires of seeing the young lady, and of solacing his mother's old age. Such cases, however, are very easily explained on my principles; or rather, indeed, my principles would lead me *a priori* to be sure that there *must* be these cases of vacillation and vibration. Where the motives on one side are *notably* stronger than those on the other, there results a definite and decisive spontaneous impulse, but where the motives are very nearly balanced, there must result (on the same principles) vacillation and vibration. During a closely balanced conflict of motives, there is not a single instant in which there does not pass across the mind some thought which adds strength to, or takes it from, one or other of the contending powers. Some time, then, must necessarily elapse before the balance adjusts itself between forces neither of which is for any two successive instants the same; and this time is, of course, one of vacillation and vibration.\* If the relative power of the two motives is constantly changing, no wonder that the resultant is constantly changing also.

"Here, then, is the simple doctrine of determinism, which I take to be a mere interpretation of universal experience, a statement in words of what every one is internally convinced of.† Every human being at every moment is infallibly determined by the law of his nature to

\* The last sentence is almost verbatim Mr. Mill's ("On Hamilton," p 584). An opponent had objected that "balancing one motive against another is not willing, but judging" Mr Mill replies "The state of mind I am speaking of is not an intellectual, but an emotional state. If there were any indispensable act of judging in this state, it would only be judging which of the two pains or pleasures was the greatest, and to regard this as the operative force would be conceding the point in favour of necessitarianism."

† These are Mr Mill's words in his "Logic" (vol. II. p. 422).



choose that course of conduct which is apprehended by him as the more pleasurable or the less painful."

Now, we are disposed to agree with by far the larger part of all this; and here is, in fact, a hopeful augury for the discussion, because by consequence the issue is so very much narrowed. We object, indeed, entirely, as a matter of words, to using the term "motive" in its deterministic sense; for to our mind a large share of the confusion which has so overspread the controversy has originated in the equivocal use of this term. We will adopt, therefore, the word "attraction," in a very similar sense to that which determinists express by the term "motive." We will call by the name of an "attraction" every thought, which proposes some pleasure, positive or negative, to be gained by some act or course of action; and we will call one attraction stronger than another, if the pleasure proposed by the former is apprehended as greater—is more attractive at the moment—than that proposed by the latter. If the thought proposes "positive" pleasure, it will be a "positive"—in the other case a "negative"—attraction.

This terminology being understood, it is very plain (as determinists urge) that every man, during by far the greater part of his life, is solicited by conflicting attractions, and it is further a manifest and undeniable matter of fact that, in the very large majority of such instances, a certain definite and decisive inclination or impulse of the will spontaneously ensues. Further, we are thoroughly disposed to agree with Mr. Mill, that this spontaneous inclination or impulse is due to the greater strength of attraction on the prevailing side, or, in other words, to the greater pleasurable (positive or negative) anticipated at the moment from one course of action as compared with the other. So strong and constant is the observed gravitation of human nature towards immediate pleasure,

that on this particular head Mr. Mill's theory seems to us thoroughly reasonable and well grounded. Nor, again, is this theory (to our mind) best refuted by dwelling on those instances of pause, or, again, of vacillation and vibration, to which reference has above been made, although we are very far from regarding the deterministic exposition of those instances as at all sufficient. But we think that the opposition between determinism and indeterminism is by no means so clearly brought out by such cases, as it is by the far more numerous ones in which the will's spontaneous impulse is definite and decisive. The whole argument, then (in our view), should be made to turn on one most simple and intelligible issue.

We beg our readers, then, to fix their attention on that definite and decisive spontaneous impulse of the will,\* which is so very common a phenomenon, and to which we have so often referred. We entirely agree with Mr. Mill, as we just now said, that this spontaneous impulse of the will is infallibly determined at each particular moment, by the balance of pleasurable as apprehended at that moment. But the whole deterministic argument rests from beginning to end on the assumption that men *never resist this spontaneous impulse*; whereas we confidently affirm, as an experienced fact, that there are cases of such resistance—numerous, unmistakable, nay, most striking. What we allege to be a fact of indubitable experience is this. At some given moment, my will's *gravitation*, as it may be called, or spontaneous impulse is in some given direction; insomuch that if I held myself *passively*, if I let my will alone, it would with absolute certainty move accordingly; but, *in fact*, I exert myself with more or less vigour to *resist* such impulse, and then the action of my

\* It may be better to point out that Dr Bain sometimes (e.g. in p 442) uses the term "spontaneous impulse"—he nowhere, we believe, says "spontaneous impulse of the will"—in a sense fundamentally distinct from our own

will is in a different, often an entirely opposite, direction. In other words, we would draw our readers' attention to the frequently occurring simultaneous existence of two very distinct phenomena. On the one hand (1) my will's gravitation or spontaneous impulse is strongly in one direction; while, on the other hand, at the same moment (2) its actual movement is quite divergent from this. Now, that which "*motives*"\*—to use deterministic language—affect, is most evidently the will's spontaneous inclination, impulse, gravitation. The determinist, then, by saying that the will's movement is infallibly determined by "*motives*," is obliged to say that the will never moves in opposition to its spontaneous impulse. And, in fact, he does say this. All determinists assume as a matter of course that the will never puts forth effort for the purpose of resisting its spontaneous impulse. We, on the contrary, allege that there is no mental fact more undeniable than the frequent putting forth of such effort.† And on this critical point issue is now to be joined.

\* For convenience sake in this paragraph we use the word "*motives*" as determinists do

† As it is very important to avoid all possibility of cavil, it will be perhaps better to add one further explanation of the exact point at issue. Mr Mill and Dr Bain hold that in each case the spontaneous impulse or inclination of the will is determined by *the balance of immediate pleasure*, and (taking into account the various explanations they give of their statement) we are so far entirely in accord with them. But our own essential argument would not be affected in the slightest degree, if this theory of theirs were disproved. And it is worth while, at the risk of being thought tedious, to make this clear.

The essence of determinism is the doctrine, that at any given moment the will's movement is infallibly and inevitably determined by circumstances. (1) internal and (2) external, i.e. (1) by the intrinsic constitution and disposition of the will, and (2) by the external influences which act on it. Now, no one doubts that in every man, during far the larger portion of his waking life, there exists what we have called a definite and decisive spontaneous impulse of his will, and determinists allege that circumstances (internal and external) determine the will's actual movement, *precisely by determining its spontaneous impulse*. It is the very essence of determinism, therefore, to allege that the will's actual movement is never divergent from its spontaneous impulse.

Before commencing our argument, however, there are one or two further questions of terminology to be settled. And, first, how shall we define the word "motive?" Our own acceptation of it may be thus set forth. We premise the obvious truth, that some ends are aimed at for their own sake, and others only for the sake of the former class: the former we will call "absolute," the latter "relative," ends. To these two classes of ends correspond two classes of "motives." My "ultimate motive" in a course of action is my resolve of pursuing some absolute end or ends, with a view to obtaining which I begin and continue that course of action. And what an "ultimate motive" is in relation to an *absolute* end or ends, precisely that is an "immediate" or "intermediate" motive in relation to a *relative* end or ends. We say "*end or ends*," because it is one of the most familiar among mental phenomena that men often aim simultaneously at many ends. A youth, *e.g.*, applies himself to study, partly for the sake of enjoying its pleasure, and partly for the sake of his future temporal advancement. Where the end is single, we may call the motive "simple;" where there is more than one end we may call the motive "complex."

But it is a different question altogether, and one entirely irrelevant to the deterministic controversy, to inquire *what* is the exact fixed relation which exists between circumstances on the one hand and the will's spontaneous impulse on the other. Mr Mill and Dr Bain adopt on this question the balance-of-pleasure theory, and here we agree with them. But quite imaginably philosophers might arise (though we think this very improbable) who should adduce strong arguments for some *different* theory on the subject. Now this, as our readers will see, is a cross-controversy altogether, and in no way affects the issue between determinism and its assailants. We have ourselves assumed, throughout our essay, the balance-of-pleasure theory as confessedly and indisputably true, because (1) we account it the true one, and because (2) it is held by all the determinists we ever heard of, but nothing would be easier than to mould our argument according to any different theory which might be established. The question, between determinists and ourselves, is not at all how the will's spontaneous impulse is *formed*, but exclusively whether it is ever *resisted*. Determinists as such say that it is never resisted, and indeterminists as such maintain the contrary.

So far we are on common ground with determinists. But *they* hold that the "resolve of pursuing some absolute end" is simply synonymous with the "desire of some preponderating pleasure," positive or negative. For the sake, therefore, of making ourselves more intelligible to our Catholic readers, we will proceed a little further. Whatever absolute end I aim at is always either "*bonum honestum*" or "*bonum delectabile*," or, in other words, it is either the practising of some virtuousness or the enjoying of some pleasure. So far as this truth is needed in our future argument, we shall not fail to prove it; here we assume it. My "ultimate motive," then, in any act or course of action, will always be either (1) my resolve of practising some virtuousness; or (2) my resolve of enjoying or trying to enjoy some pleasure; or (3) some combination of such resolves. In the first two cases my motive is "simple;" in the last it is "complex." We need hardly add how often it happens that such "resolves," however real and influential, are implicit or unreflected on.

So much on the word "motive;" but now further. We have already expressed our conviction that at any given moment the will's spontaneous impulse (of which we have said so much) is infallibly determined by the preponderance of pleasure proposed. The thought of this preponderating pleasure may be called the "*preponderating attraction*," or "*the resultant of co-existing attractions*." Again, we have often to speak of the will's "*spontaneous impulse*;" this we will sometimes call the will's "*preponderating impulse*;" or, for brevity's sake, we may omit the adjective altogether, and speak of the will's "*impulse*." Resistance to this impulse may be called "*anti-impulsive effort*" issuing in "*anti-impulsive action*."

The determinist, then, denies that there is any such thing in man as anti-impulsive effort, or (*a fortiori*) as anti-impulsive action. According to his theory, not only

the will's spontaneous impulse, but its actual movement, is at every moment infallibly determined by the balance of pleasure. He readily admits that men often put forth great efforts—sometimes most intense efforts—in response to their preponderating attraction of the moment, witness the case above mentioned, of brave soldiers engaged in battle. But he alleges that such effort is always in *response*, and never in *opposition*, to their preponderating attraction; and that this must inevitably be the case while human nature remains what it is.\* On our side, if we expressed our full mind, we should say that all men in full possession of their faculties have a true moral power—and by no means unfrequently exercise it—of anti-impulsive action; and that of course, therefore, they may be no less free when they yield to their will's impulse than when they resist it. In our present argument, however (as we have explained), the ideas of “power” and “freedom” are to be put in abeyance, and we are to speak only of experienced facts. It is our purpose, then, here to prove against the determinist that—so far from anti-impulsive efforts and action being non-existent—they are by no means rare; nay, that in one particular class of men they are among the commonest and most unmistakable phenomena in the whole world.

We need hardly say that, in our view, devout Theists are immeasurably the most virtuous class of human beings. Consequently, in our view, devout Theists will, with absolute certainty, immeasurably exceed other men in their anti-impulsive efforts; for the simple reason that they im-

\* We cannot understand the determinists' objection to the word “necessarianism,” as expressing their doctrine. According to that doctrine, so long as my nature remains what it is, my volitions are infallibly determined by circumstances external and internal. On the one hand, I have no power of altering my nature, on the other hand, I have not, nor have had, any power of controlling those past and present circumstances, which in combination infallibly and inevitably determine my volition. How can one imagine a more complete “necessitation” of my whole conduct?

measurably exceed other men in the vigilant care with which they adjust their volitions by a standard which they consider supremely authoritative. Nor have we any hesitation in saying that able and thoughtful men could never have even dreamed of so monstrous a theory as determinism, had they not been densely and crassly ignorant of the practical working of devout Theism. Here, in fact, is one of those instances, by no means few, in which a devout Christian possesses no ordinary advantage over irreligious men, in his power of investigating truth. He could as easily doubt that he *experiences* temptation, as that from time to time he *resists* it; or, to put the thing more distinctly, he could as easily doubt that at times the preponderating impulse of his will is towards some pleasurable which he accounts unlawful, as he could doubt that at this or that given moment he is *resisting* such impulse. We will not, however, begin with considering the practical working, in this respect, of devout Theism; we will begin with that great majority of mankind who are, either in theory or at least in practice, irreligious. Even such men do from time to time resist their will's preponderating impulse; whether for the sake of acting virtuously, or, much more frequently, for the sake of promoting their permanent worldly interest. And as our whole appeal is, of course, necessarily to experienced facts, we must be pardoned a certain familiarity of illustration. We will begin with such a case as the following:—

I have for some time past been a reckless spendthrift, and am well aware that I am travelling rapidly along the road to ruin; though my temperament is such that the positive attraction of present pleasure greatly preponderates over the negative attraction of escape from a direly calamitous future. One fine day, however, in my travels I come across a wretched and squalid creature, who recounts to me his history; and I find that its earlier part

is a precise parallel of my own. The sight of his abject and deplorable condition produces on me a profound impression, and the idea of him is ever haunting me. While this impression remains fresh, there is a complete reversal in the relative power of those attractions which solicit me, and whenever the thought enters my mind of squandering money, the memory of what I have seen promptly redresses the balance, and the definite decisive impulse of my will is towards economy. Time, however, passes on, and my memory of the poor creature I met with becomes fainter, until at last, on some occasion when I am very specially drawn by some tempting indulgence, the decisive and definite impulse of my will is towards wasting money in its purchase. Is it, or is it not, infallibly certain, from the laws of human nature, that I shall yield to this impulse? Are there, or are there not, cases in which a person so circumstanced—even though in no way under the influence of religious motives—by means of anti-impulsive efforts, holds back his will, and fixes his thoughts again on the ruined spendthrift he has seen; until a lively counter-attraction has resulted, and the will's preponderating impulse has changed its direction? Let an inquirer honestly examine his own past consciousness, and let him appeal to the testimony of others: we are very certain what the answer will be.

It will be said, perhaps, that at last there is no very courageous or heroic resistance here, seeing that the will's impulse, though definite and decisive, was by no means intense. The answer, however, is easy. Firstly, if one unmistakable case of anti-impulsive effort be established, the deterministic theory is overthrown. Secondly, we are the very last to allege that any very courageous or heroic resistance to preponderating impulse will be found, except in devout Theists.

Our second illustration shall be taken from a far



humbler and more commonplace event. A, B, and C, three young brothers, go to a dentist. He tells them all the same thing: "You have not been taught the proper way of brushing your teeth. If you don't take more time over it than is now your habit, and if you don't perform the operation in the way I have just shown you, you will lose all your serviceable teeth before you pass the prime of life." The three of them accept his statement as true. A has always had a perfect horror of false teeth. The thought of such a danger is vividly present with him every night and morning, when the tooth-brush is in his hands; and he spontaneously obeys the dentist's admonition. B, by temperament, cares little for the future; accordingly, in a very few days he has forgotten all about the dentist, and goes on just as he did before. Neither of these cases evidently includes any phenomenon inconsistent with determinism. C's history, however, is different. For two or three weeks, indeed, his will's preponderating impulse leads him to take the requisite trouble. One morning, however, when the wind is southerly and the sky cloudy, he is in a hurry to get his breakfast over and start off hunting; and his very decided impulse is to make his tooth-brushing a most perfunctory operation. He distinctly remembers, however, the dentist's warning, and he knows well enough that, if he once begin to neglect it, there is imminent danger of confirmation in a bad habit. These thoughts are clearly and distinctly in his mind, though not so vividly as to preponderate over the opposite attraction. Nevertheless—to use an equestrian simile such as he would himself love—he pulls himself up, and reins himself in; he dwells on the thoughts which are so clearly and distinctly in his mind, until they become vivid, and the balance of attraction is changed to the opposite side. Determinists say that such a case as this never happens; that the laws of human nature forbid it. Will any candid inquirer on reflection endorse their dictum?

We may appeal, indeed, to the universal voice of mankind, which, on a matter of observed fact, is the most irrefragable of authorities.\* It is quite proverbial, and in every one's mouth, that man has a real power of following reason where it conflicts with passion. Now, men would not surely have come to believe in such a power had they not observed numerous facts in corroboration; especially each man within the sphere of his own intimate self-experience.

Further, considering how very small a proportion of mankind can look on their own habitual conduct with satisfaction, if they choose carefully to measure it even by their own standard of right, emphatic stress may justly be laid on the universal conviction that there is such a thing as sin and guilt. There could be no sin or guilt if every one's conduct were infallibly and inevitably determined by circumstances; and what a balm, therefore, to wounded consciences is offered by the deterministic theory! Yet so strong and ineradicable in the mass of men is their conviction of possessing a real power against temptation, that they never attempt to purchase peace of mind by *disclaiming* that power. But, as we have already urged, how could such a conviction have possibly come to possess them, had they not frequently experienced that power in its actual exercise? †

\* Mr Mill ("On Hamilton," p 581, note) speaks with contempt of "accepting Hodge as a better authority in metaphysics than Locke or Kant." But we think there is much truth in his opponent's affirmation, "that no philosopher, unless he be one in a thousand, can see or feel anything that is inconsistent with his preconceived opinion."

† Mr Mill at times has certainly a singular way of expressing his ideas on determinism. In his work "On Hamilton" (p 575, note), he puts this question, with an obvious implication that it must be answered in the negative "If I am determined to prefer innocence to the satisfaction of a particular desire, through an estimate of the relative worth of innocence and the gratification, can this estimate, while unchanged, leave me at liberty to choose the gratification in preference to innocence?" Why plainly—on Mr Mill's principles—to whatever extent I may more highly estimate the worth of innocence as compared with the gratification, I am often inevitably

We cannot doubt, then, that even the mass of men who live mainly for this world do by no means unfrequently, however languidly and falteringly, oppose themselves to the spontaneous impulse of their will. For our own part, indeed, we hold confidently that those cases of vacillation and vibration, to which we have more than once referred, are often results of this circumstance. Many of these cases, doubtless, can be explained in the way suggested by Mr. Mill; but certainly not all. In several of them, we are confident, the fact is, that the will first languidly and falteringly resists its own spontaneous impulse, and then (for want of due energy) sinks back into acquiescence; that another languid effort presently succeeds, to be again followed by relapse; and so on possibly for a considerable period of time. Still—though all men do, from time to time, put forth some anti-impulsive effort—it follows obviously, as we have already said, from our philosophical principles, that very far the most signal illustrations of the doctrine we are defending will be found in the devout Theist's resistance to temptation. Nor has the determinist any right to ignore such facts because he himself may believe that no God is cognizable and that devout Theism is a superstition. If it be unmistakably proved that those who hold and act on a certain belief (however *untrue* he may consider that belief) do put forth great, or indeed any, anti-impulsive effort, he is bound in reason to abandon his theory. We will proceed, then, to exhibit, as clearly as we can, those facts to which we invite his attention. To Catholics they are familiar, and the determinist may easily, if he chooses, convince himself of their truth. Nor is

driven to choose the latter in preference to the former. According to him, this result will inevitably ensue, whenever the balance of pleasurable-ness is on the side of gratification. How strange that he should speak of "*estimating the relative worth*" of two objects, when he meant to express "*balancing their relative pleasurable-ness.*" He seems ashamed of his own theory, when he has to face it.

there any reason why, in stating them, we should adopt the artificial course of veiling our own hearty sympathy with piety, or our conviction that those who are not devout Theists are like poor sheep going astray. It suffices, if we carefully avoid all "*petitio principii*;" if we never assume the truth of Theism as any part of our premisses; if we state distinctly and articulately the facts which we are alleging in argument.

Before we begin this task, however, we will make one or two preliminary remarks, which will enable us to accomplish it better. Our readers, therefore, will understand that what immediately follows is no integral part of our argument, but only an *introduction* thereto. And the first of these preliminary remarks is that a devout Theist thinks very far more than another of merely *interior* acts. He will feel it a sacred duty to contend most earnestly against his will's impulse, though solicited thereby to no other offence than an evil thought, whether it be of impurity, of anger, of impatience, of pride, of vainglory.

Our second preliminary remark is, that to those who have trained themselves in habits of virtue, virtue itself supplies an attraction—often an exceedingly powerful one,\* and which by itself suffices to counterbalance a

\* What is here said in the text may at first cause a certain difficulty in the mind of some Catholics, which we had better remove. Our comment, however, will be more appropriately placed in a note, because it is so complete a digression from our general argument.

It is held by the large majority of theologians, and appears to us indubitably true, that no act is virtuous which is not directed "*actually*" or "*virtually*" to "*bonum honestum*"—to a virtuous end. Suppose, *eg*, I meet a poor man, who is a singularly worthy recipient of alms. At the same time I neither know this fact nor think of inquiring about it, but I give him some money, merely to obtain his services as guide to some beautiful scenery in the neighbourhood. The act is *materially* most virtuous, because the man is so worthy a recipient, but any one would be supremely absurd who should account it a *formally* virtuous act of almsgiving.

The difficulty, then, in the text which may at first strike a Catholic is this: how can virtue ever supply an "*attraction*"? An act done merely for the sake of pleasure is no virtuous act at all, and if it be not done for the sake of pleasure, how in such cases can virtue be said to supply an *attraction*? The

large number of opposite gratifications. Acts of love towards God, of gratitude towards Christ, of zeal for God's glory, are often in a pious man extremely pleasurable; nay, even such acts as resignation to God's will in trouble and patience under cruel insults, not unfrequently carry with them special sweetness of their own. The peace also of subdued passions and a good conscience may afford a pleasure which "passeth all understanding." At times, again, the thought of heaven is most bracing and exhilarating. Then there are negative attractions also, which act powerfully on the side of virtue. The knowledge of that remorse, which will assuredly follow a good man's momentary lapse from virtue; the fear of hell or of purgatory, all these may act very strongly on the emotions. Then—as our supposed determinist set forth in his exposition of doctrine at the commencement of our essay—there are negative attractions, which are very powerful without being emotional at all.\* The difficulty, *e.g.*, of

answer, however, is simple. An act need not be *motived* by pleasure at all, and yet a very large amount of pleasure may be annexed to its performance, whether by the ordinary laws of human nature or by God's special intervention. Take the instance above given. Suppose I had known the poor man to be a most worthy recipient of alms, and had given him money, not in return for any service whatever, but exclusively from my remembrance how highly our Blessed Lord praised almsgiving, and that forasmuch as I did it to the least of His disciples, I did it to Him. No Catholic will deny that this act was most virtuous, yet I might have derived far more pleasure from this thought of Christ than I should have obtained from the most beautiful scenery to which the poor man could have guided me.

We do not, of course, at all deny that in very many cases there is a mixture of motives. Perhaps I know very well how worthy a recipient of alms is this man, and I give him money, partly from such a reason as that just described, but partly also that I may obtain his services as guide. Different theologians pronounce differently on such a case, so far at least as regards their mode of expression. We are ourselves disposed to say that the integral energy of the will at any such moment should be considered as consisting of two different acts, one *motived* by virtuousness, and the other by pleasure, that the former act is simply virtuous, and the latter is simply indifferent, neither good nor bad.

\* A few words of psychological exposition will here be useful on these non-emotional attractions, though our doctrine on them is entirely concurrent with that of Mr Mill and Dr Bain. Let us take our illustration from

breaking through a firmly established habit is a very powerful negative attraction, though accompanied with little or no emotion. And a similar non-emotional but strong negative attraction is experienced when some good end is proposed by the intellect with unusual vividness—a vividness, perhaps, very far greater than is due to the existing strength of acquired habit, because, proportionately to such vividness, there would be peculiar difficulty and pain in *contravening* that end. Taking all these and many similar phenomena into consideration, it is easy to account for the indubitable fact, that very frequently the spontaneous impulse of a devout Theist's will is one of high virtue.

But every one well knows by experience how singularly capricious is human emotion. The very same thoughts

Dr Bain's own instance of early rising A, B, and C agree in this, that the spontaneous impulse of their will leads them on some given morning to rise at an hour when the counter-attractions are by no means weak which solicit them to stay in bed A is thus influenced because it is the first of September, all yesterday he was thinking of the partridges, and now that the happy day has arrived he springs out of bed with a joyous heart B fancies he hears an alarm of fire, and starts up in a panic while C gets up in accordance with his firm and established habit. A is influenced by a positive attraction, B by a negative one, both acting on their will through their emotions But consider the attraction which acts on C, or, in other words, the thought of pleasure or pain which influences his will This thought is nothing else than his sense of the difficulty which opposes his resisting the impulse engendered by his habit We see at once that this thought acts powerfully on his will in the way of suggesting pain, without exciting his emotions at all. On the other hand, there *would* be a strong emotion (of pain) if his impulse were *thwarted*, if, *e.g.*, he were compelled to go on for hours lying in bed, because on some bitterly cold morning he had neither clothes to put on nor means of lighting a fire

So far we are entirely at one with determinists For the sake, however, of giving one further instance of the contrast between their theory and our own, we may add that we admit a fourth case, that of D, whose spontaneous impulse would lead him to lie in bed, but who, for the sake of some good end, resists that impulse and gets up The determinist must deny that such a case is possible so long as the laws of human nature remain what they are

Dr Bain, in his treatment of moral habits (pp 500–519), speaks, so far as we have observed, in entire consistency with his deterministic theory For our own part, we hold that anti-impulsive efforts are immeasurably the most effective means of strengthening a good habit, but Dr Bain nowhere implies that there are such things

which on one day or at one moment excite the keenest feeling, on another day or at another moment fail wholly of any such effect. According to the laws of human nature, this great emotional difference is probably far more considerable in the case of more susceptible and highly-strung souls than in that of ordinary mortals; nor do we doubt that God often, for purposes of probation, intensifies by special agency the working of natural laws. Every one acquainted with saints' lives well knows the vicissitudes between spiritual rapture on one side and spiritual desolation on the other, which constitute one principal probation of those most highly favoured among mankind.

This statement, then, brings us to the particular fact on which we lay stress in our present controversy. At some given moment, some holy man finds suddenly a strongly preponderating impulse of his will solliciting him to some act, which he regards with intense disapprobation as a grievous offence against his Creator. He still, of course, retains that very considerable negative attraction to good which is caused by his habits of virtue; but his *emotions* in that direction are for the moment in abeyance, while those leading in the opposite direction are for the moment so abnormally excited as vastly to predominate over the opposite attraction. Here, then, we have a crucial test of the deterministic theory. The enormous balance of pleasurable-ness is on the side of yielding to the temptation; and according to determinists, therefore, the holy man (by the very necessity of human nature) yields irresistibly thereto—as irresistibly as a physical point yields to the resultant of the forces which attract it. We need hardly say how violently such a statement is opposed to the most undeniable facts. Nor, indeed, need we confine our attention to persons of saintly attainment; the case of any devout Theist will suffice. Let it once be understood what is the deterministic theory, and no one, acquainted with

the most ordinary facts of Catholic experience, can hear it advocated without amazement. For the deterministic theory comes simply to this, that resistance to predominating temptation\* is not so much as possible under the existing laws of human nature. There is no single Catholic, who has at any time so much as attempted to lead a devout life, who does not know the reverse of this by his own quite unmistakable self-experience. You might as well try to persuade him that he is never *visited* with predominating temptation as that he never resists it; nay, you might as well try to persuade him that the rain does not wet, that the wind does not blow, that the sun does not warm. As we said before, no pious man can possibly hold determinism as soon as he comes to see what is meant by the term.

It has been maintained, indeed, by determinists that no psychological analysis is possible of such a phenomenon as resistance to predominating temptation; that the relation between intellect and will, as testified by experience, implies an absolute dependence of volitions on the motives intellectually proposed. When we come (in a later part of this essay) to treat objections, we will answer this in detail; here we will but make a brief remark. There is no experienced fact in the whole world more conspicuously manifest than that pious men very frequently do resist predominant temptation. If, then, there be a psychological theory which would lead validly to the conclusion that no such resistance ever takes place, such theory is by that very circumstance shown demonstratively to be false. On the other hand, if it were really the case that the phenomena

\* A person may be said to be visited by "temptation" whenever he is solicited by any attraction towards forbidden pleasures, even though such attraction be more than counterbalanced by other opposite ones. By using the term "predominant" temptation, then, we mean to express a case in which the attractions towards forbidden pleasure preponderate over their opposites, so that the will's spontaneous impulse is in the sinful direction



of resistance have not yet been satisfactorily analyzed by scientific men, that would be no ground for disbelieving what experience so urgently testifies, but only for working at the indicated psychological problem. No explanation at all adequate has yet been discovered of the phenomena of dreams; but men do not on that ground deny, that there *are* such things as dreams. However (as we shall set forth a little further on) we think ourselves that the psychological explanation commonly given by indeterminists is in substance entirely sound and sufficient.

There are two further facts, which we allege to be testified by experience; and we will here set them forth, not because we can lay any stress on them in our controversy with determinism, but merely for the sake of avoiding possible misconception. It is a very frequent phenomenon, we hold, that a devout man, even when his will's spontaneous impulse leads to an entirely virtuous act, proceeds nevertheless by an effort to make his act more virtuous (*i.e.* more efficaciously directed to the virtuous end) than it otherwise would be. On the other hand, it is not unfrequent that a man *partially* resists some temptation, but not with sufficient energy for the avoidance (as Catholics consider) of mortal sin.

We have now set forth, sufficiently for our purpose, those broad facts of human action which make it so obviously certain that determinism is false. At the same time, our exposition will have shown how innocent we are of charges frequently brought against indeterminists, that they disparage the inestimable importance of virtuous habits and of good moral education. What can be more important for the cause of virtue than that the spontaneous impulse of men's will should be as virtuous as it can possibly be made? And what other agency is there (on our theory) which, on the whole, tends to make that impulse virtuous, comparably with the effect produced by

good habits and good education? Zealous, indeed, as the Church has ever been in upholding Freewill, still more conspicuous has been her zeal for her children's moral and religious training.

One further question remains to be asked. What are the *motives* which actuate a man when he resists his will's spontaneous impulse? In every instance, by far the easiest course is to act in *response* to that impulse; and no one will take the trouble of resisting it, except for some unmistakably worthy motive, some clear dictate of reason. There are two, and two only, classes of motives which occur to our mind as adequate to the purpose. First, there is the resolve of doing what is right. We consider ourselves to have shown irrefragably in the third essay in this volume, that there are various acts, cognizable under certain circumstances to be base, detestable, forbidden by a Supreme Ruler; and certain others excellent, noble, approved, and counselled by this Supreme Ruler. Here, then, is one most worthy motive for resisting my will's spontaneous impulse, whenever that impulse solicits me to something detestable and forbidden, or even to something less excellent than another proposed alternative. Another motive, which often suggests itself, is my desire of promoting my permanent happiness in the next world, or even in this. It happens again and again that my will's spontaneous impulse solicits me to some act which—even if I consider this world alone—is known by me as likely to result in misery; or, at all events, in much less happiness than I should otherwise enjoy. Here it is a plain dictate of reason that I resist that impulse, which otherwise would lead to consequences so disastrous. It is an observed, phenomenon, we contend, that men do at times resist the spontaneous impulse of their will, when induced so to do by one or other of these two classes of motives; \* but where such motives are away,

\* We do not, of course, for a moment deny that determinists include both

it seems to us a matter of course that every one is always led by his predominating attraction.

With one further explanation, we bring to a close our positive exposition of the doctrine we would maintain. It regards the distinction drawn by Mr. Mill, between mere "determinism" and "fatalism." We here differ (we think) from the large majority of his opponents; for we cannot but hold that he establishes his point (see his work "On Hamilton," p. 601). Fatalists maintain that the will can exercise no influence over the character, and Mr. Mill may earnestly deny this (as he does), without at all affirming that the will has any power of resisting its own spontaneous impulse. Mr. Mill, of course, quite admits that mere determinism is as absolutely contradictory to Freewill as is fatalism itself. But the practical bearing on the point at issue is excellently expressed by him, in a note replying to an opponent, at pp. 602, 603.

Suppose that a person dislikes some part of his own character, and would be glad to change it. He cannot, as he well knows, change it by a mere act of volition. He must use the means which nature gives to ourselves, as she gave to our parents and teachers, of influencing our character by appropriate circumstances. If he is a fatalist, he will not use these means, for he will not believe in their efficacy. but if he is a [determinist and] if the desire is stronger than the means are disagreeable, he will set about doing what, if done, will improve his character.

We are now to consider the very numerous objections that have been raised against indeterminism: a consideration which, we venture to say, will at every step put in clearer light the irrefragable truth of that doctrine against

the pleasurable of virtue and the pleasurable of promoting a man's own permanent interest among the attractions which influence his will. But it is a matter of every-day experience that the pleasurable of this or that immediate gratification is more attractive than these at some given moment. And what we allege is, that men not unfrequently resist such preponderating attraction for the sake of practising virtue or of promoting their own permanent interest.

which they are brought. It will be in various ways, however, more convenient to consider these objections as brought, not merely against indeterminism, but against the full doctrine of Freewill. Nor is such a procedure in any way unfair to our opponents, but the very contrary, for it does but offer them a larger target to shoot at. Hitherto, then, we have been merely alleging, as an experienced fact, that men often do resist their will's spontaneous impulse: but in the next essay of our series we are to maintain, as a doctrine *deducible* from the experienced fact, that they possess the *power* of resistance; and that, possessing it, they act with true freedom on every relevant occasion, whether they exercise that power or no.\* This is the doctrine of Freewill; and we are now to treat the various objections which have been raised against it by determinists.

It is difficult to marshal Mr. Mill's objections in due order, because he is directly answering, not our doctrine, but Sir W. Hamilton's. We gladly give all honour to Sir W. Hamilton, for his zealous advocacy both of Theism and of Freewill, but there are particulars on which we widely differ from him, and, indeed, we regard Reid as both a sounder and abler, though of course a very much less learned, philosopher. Indeed, we think Mr. Mill obtains unreasonable advantage on many philosophical questions by replying to Hamilton's statements and arguments rather than to Reid's. At all events, we have not ourselves to do with any of Mr. Mill's objections, except those which are relevant against our own doctrine. We will take every care, however, that no one of those objections shall fail to be distinctly stated and examined by us, either in this or in a following essay of our series; and we will supplement them with all the others known to us, which have been advanced by Dr. Bain and others of his school.

I. The first objection, we consider, shall be that to which

● this doctrine is developed in the essay on "Freewill"—Ed.

we have already expressly referred; viz. that no satisfactory psychological analysis has ever been alleged, of such an act as resistance to the will's spontaneous impulse. We have already said that, if this were really the case—seeing that the *fact* of such resistance is undeniable—no other inference would be legitimate, except, perhaps, that psychologists have been wanting in perspicacity. We think, however, that the account of the matter commonly given by libertarians is true and sufficient; viz. that the will can for a moment suspend its movement, and then proceed to a choice of the motive on which it shall proceed to act. But perhaps it will be more satisfactory if we work the matter out with more detail. We will take, therefore, as our special instance, that of a devout Theist resisting strong predominant temptation; because it is this which, far more vividly than any other, displays the phenomena of Free-will, and because what we say of this can be applied without much difficulty to all other cases.

We will suppose, then, a holy man resisting some predominant temptation to mortal sin. Our own view of what takes place under these circumstances is such as this. In the very first instant he yields to it by necessity,\* because his will has had no time whatever to collect its self-determining power. In the next instant he does two things: he suspends the act of consent, and he looks up to Almighty God for strength and help. We may add that such prayer continues with great intensity (though often perhaps implicitly) through the whole ensuing conflict. After the second instant, as we may call it, we arrive at the critical point. Much more probably than not—since he is so holy a man—even before the temptation began, God was implicitly at least in his thoughts, but otherwise, according

\* According to Catholic terminology, the very first assaults of temptation are called "*motus primò primì*," and to these the will consents without any sin. They are followed by "*motus secundò primì*," and even to these the will may consent without mortal sin.

to the experienced laws of *habit*, the very presence of temptation summons into his mind some virtuous thought, distinct or confused as the case may be. From the motives which present themselves, he rapidly chooses such as seem most hopeful for success. Sometimes it may happen that such thoughts speedily excite the appropriate sensible devotion, and that his will's impulse at once changes its direction. At other times, though very little sensible devotion may be excited, yet the good motives are so vividly set before his mind, that they constitute a very strong non-emotional attraction, and that in this case also the will's impulse is speedily changed. At other times, lastly, the force of predominant attraction long remains on the other side, and he is left to support the arduous conflict in desolation. Students of hagiology well know S. Catherine of Sienna's fearful probation, and her heroic demeanour for so many days.\* For all that long period, so it would seem, the preponderance of attraction was strongly towards forbidden gratification, and her anti-impulsive action intense and unremitting.

Such, in our view, is on the whole a true analysis of what takes place under the circumstances. Those psychologists who are not satisfied with it must really take on themselves the trouble of discovering a better. The broad fact of resistance remains simply undeniable.

II. A second objection, raised by determinists, often takes the form of a triumphantly asked question. Can it be gravely maintained, they ask, that a man ever acts against his strongest motive? Never was there a poorer equivocation than this "Achilles" of our opponents. What do they mean by "acting against the strongest motive"? Do they mean "resisting the strongest attraction"? In that case it is the negative, and not the affirmative, answer

\* We need hardly say that Catholics attribute this moral power of resisting grave temptation to the agency of grace. Such considerations, however, are external to the present controversy

to their question, which is the true paradox. Is it paradoxical to say that reason *can* resist predominant passion? or to say that it *can not*? The *ne plus ultra* of paradox, indeed, has been reached, we should think, by Mr. Fitzjames Stephen, in his work on "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." "That any human creature," he says (p. 294), "ever under any conceivable circumstances, acted otherwise than in obedience to that which, for the time being, was his strongest wish, is to me an assertion as incredible and as unmeaning as the assertion that on a particular occasion two straight lines enclosed a space." "A man's strongest wish" must be the wish which determined the spontaneous impulse of his will. Mr. Stephen, then, is not content with saying that men have, in fact, no power of anti-impulsive effort; but, he adds, that to affirm their possession of that power is an "unmeaning" statement.

The only other sense in which we can understand this phrase, "the strongest motive," is "the worthiest or most reasonable motive." But to understand the determinist as meaning *this*, is to suppose him in a state of absolute hallucination. If all Theists acted consistently on what they hold to be the worthiest and most reasonable motive, they would lead lives of spotless virtue.

III. Another argument, somewhat similar to the former, is frequently used by determinists. "When any change of will is produced," they say, "it is always effected by the agency of *motives*. Let it be supposed, for instance, that a man is now beginning, for the sake of his own permanent welfare, to shun some imprudent pleasure, in which he has hitherto indulged. Well, by the very statement of the case it is evident that a new motive has intervened, or, at all events, has received great additional vigour; viz. the desire of his own permanent welfare. It is in exact accordance with our doctrine that, where there is a change in the motives, there is a change in the will's movement."

It is this argument which, more than any other, has impressed us with a sense of the evil resulting from the equivocal use of the word "motive." Of course, in *our* sense of the word, under such circumstances as the above, a new "motive" has intervened; for this means neither more nor less than that a new resolve has been formed. But by "motive" *they* mean "the desire of some pleasure," and this being understood, we thus rejoin.

In the first place—as far as our own experience and observation go—it is by no means universally true that whenever a man begins to act with much greater vigour for his own permanent welfare, the thought of promoting that welfare has first become a more pleasurable and attractive thought. Often it is so, but we think that often it is not so. For argument's sake, however, we will waive this demur, and will so far accept the determinists' allegation.

We proceed, then, to ask them this simple question. Do they mean that, whenever a man begins to renounce some imprudent enjoyment for the sake of his permanent welfare, the pleasure of promoting that welfare has first become greater than the pleasure of that enjoyment? To answer this question in the negative would be to abandon their doctrine; for it would be to say that a man sometimes acts otherwise than according to the balance of pleasurable-ness: they must, therefore, answer it in the affirmative. But if the pleasure of promoting his own permanent welfare has become greater to the agent than the pleasure of the enjoyment, then his will's spontaneous inclination, impulse, gravitation, is in favour of renouncement. The objection, then, which we are here considering, turns out at last to be nothing but the expression of that opinion with which we have credited the determinists throughout: they do but mean to say that no man ever acts in opposition to his will's spontaneous impulse. This is the very opinion against which we have been expressly arguing, and in



disproof of which we have adduced, as we consider, such undeniable facts. It happens again and again, we are quite confident, that a man will make efforts—if he is a devout Theist, very energetic and sustained efforts—towards renouncing this or that enjoyment for the sake of his permanent welfare at times when his thought of promoting that welfare is distinctly less pleasurable than is the enjoyment which he strives to renounce. And, in saying this, we use the word “pleasurable” in the full sense given to it by Mr. Mill and Dr. Bain; as including *negative* pleasure, and also what we have called “non-emotional attractions.” The proof, of course, which we give of our allegation, is the fact on which we have so constantly insisted, viz. that such renouncement is often begun in opposition to the will’s spontaneous impulse.

IV. Wonderful to say, determinists sometimes accuse their opponents of holding that men possess the power of acting without *any* motive. Nay, even Sir W. Hamilton (quoted by Mr. Mill in p. 572) calls a free act a “motiveless volition.” This comes entirely from the equivocal use of the word “motive.”

V. It has often been argued by libertarians that all men are *conscious* of freedom, and that there is an end of the matter. Against this argument Mr. Mill raises (1) a verbal and (2) a real objection. In his verbal objection we think he is right, in his real objection he is most certainly wrong. We begin with the former. “We are *conscious*,” he says (“On Hamilton,” p. 580), “of what *is*, not of what *will* or *can* be:” and the word “conscious,” therefore, is used improperly by libertarians to express their meaning. He admits, however (p. 582, note), on being taxed with inconsistency by an opponent, that in his “Logic” he used the word “consciousness” in the very sense to which he objects in his work “On Hamilton,” as expressing “the whole of our familiar and intimate knowledge concerning

ourselves." We will use the word "self-intimacy" to express what is here spoken of. And this verbal question being disposed of, we will set forth in our own way the argument to which Mr. Mill objects, that we may consider the value of his objection.

Take an obvious illustration. I am in the habit of walking out with a stick in my hand. I know, by self-intimacy, that I brandish this stick about in whatever direction I choose; in other words, I have a confused memory of numberless instances in which I have willed to do this, and the result has followed; while I also remember that in no single case have I willed it *without* the result following. In precisely the same way, I know by self-intimacy that I resist in some degree my will's spontaneous impulse, whenever I make the attempt to do so. Then, by a certain course of reasoning, the validity of which is to be defended in the next essay of our series, I infer from this latter phenomenon that I have a *power* of resisting the impulse of my will; or, in other words, that I am a free agent. Now, how does Mr Mill reply to this reasoning? Surely by a most shallow sophism. When two courses are open to us, he says ("On Hamilton," p. 582), "I feel (or am convinced) that I could have chosen the other course, if I had preferred it, that is, if I had liked it better; but not that I could have *chosen* one course while I *preferred* the other." Such a statement would not possess a moment's plausibility, were it not for Mr. Mill's ambiguous use of the terms "prefer" and "like better;" and we will begin with exposing this equivocation. In one sense, I may "prefer" course A to course B at some given moment; viz. in this sense, that I am at the moment more *attracted* by the former than by the latter; that I spontaneously *gravitate* to the former course, and not to the latter. And yet at the very same moment I may "prefer" immeasurably course B to course A: in this sense, that I think course B

immeasurably *preferable*, as, *e g* , being immeasurably more conducive to my permanent happiness. Whether, therefore, I pursue course A or course B, in either case it may be truly said that I pursue the course which I "prefer" to the other, the course which I "like better" than the other. And it is this mere equivocation on which Mr Mill unconsciously rests for the *primâ facie* plausibility of his argument. Passing, however, from words to things, let us look at the experienced facts of every-day life. Certainly we do not deny it to be a matter of frequent occurrence that (under such circumstances as those above described) I effectively choose course A. "*video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor.*" But Mr. Mill has to maintain that (under such circumstances) no human being does, or ever did, effectively choose course B; nay, and that no human being has so much as the power of choosing it, so long as the laws of human nature remain what they are. After what has been said in the earlier part of our essay, we may safely leave this question of fact to be determined by any even moderately candid inquirer.

VI. Dr. Bain (p 540) quotes Mr Bailey with approval, who argues that all the world in practice takes determinism for granted —

Men are perpetually staking pleasure and fortune and reputation, and even life itself, on the very principle [of determinism] which they speculatively reject. Take for example the operations of a campaign. A general . . cannot move a step, without taking for granted that the minds of the soldiers will be determined by the motives presented to them. When he directs his aide-de-camp to bear a message to an officer in another part of the field, he calculates on his obedience with as little mistrust as he reckons on the magnifying power of the telescope in his hand. When he orders his soldiers to wheel, to deploy, to form a square, is he less confident in the result than when he performs some physical operation—when he draws a sword, pulls a trigger, or seals a despatch? etc

As regards the external act of obedience, this kind of act is precisely of the class which on our principles can be predicted beforehand with almost infallible certainty. When the general has issued a command, the spontaneous impulse of any given soldier's will is towards obedience; if for no other reason, because he knows that he would be at once shot down were he to hesitate; and, on the other hand, neither the motive of virtue nor the motive of permanent self-interest has any place whatever on the opposite side. Now, as our readers will remember, it is a very important part of our thesis that no human being takes the trouble of resisting the impulse of his will, unless in such resistance he is pursuing either virtue or his own permanent happiness. The facts, then, here cited by Mr. Bailey, square entirely with our own theory; and those stated in his next paragraph are precisely of the same kind. As regards his remarks referring to Political Economy—which we do not, however, think it worth while to quote—we can only recommend him to read the first of Mr. Mill's "*Essays on some unsettled questions of Political Economy*," in order that he may see their fundamental fallacy.

But the very case thus placed before his readers by Dr. Bain—the case of military obedience—signally illustrates what to our mind is among the greatest blots in deterministic morality: its confining attention to exterior acts. Certain sentries, *e.g.*, are ordered to stay at their posts for so many hours. It may be predicted with almost infallible certainty that they will do so, because they know they will otherwise be shot; and because, on the other hand, there is no motive of virtue or self-interest which can come into play in an opposite direction. Still, the interior act, *commanding* this exterior one, varies indefinitely with different persons; and there is no pretext whatever for saying that you can rely beforehand on this being this or that. A, *e.g.*, is

actuated throughout by the simple motive of obedience to God's command; B, in addition to this, offers up his wearisome duty as a penance for his sins; C is animated by zeal for his country's cause; D is influenced by strong convictions on the nobleness of military obedience, E is kept where he is, by no other motive than his dislike of being put to death. And a similar remark may be made on numberless other instances, where men agree with each other as a matter of course in doing the external act, but differ indefinitely as to the spirit in which they do it. It is really difficult to determine how often (according to what we account sound moral doctrine) the good man's probation consists—not in the external act which he has to do—but in the motives for which he does it. We may safely say that during far the largest portion of his life, his growth in virtue mainly depends, either (1) on his choice of good motives for his every-day acts, or (2) on acts altogether interior, such as patience, self-examination, humility, forgivingness, equitableness of judgment, purity, under circumstances of trial. All this is entirely external to the sphere of a determinist's thoughts.

VII. Mr Mill alleges ("On Hamilton," p. 577) that determinism is shown to be probable "by each person's observation of the voluntary actions of those with whom he comes into contact; and by the power which every one has of foreseeing actions with a degree of exactness proportioned to his previous experience and knowledge of the agents, and with a certainty often quite equal to that with which he predicts the commonest physical events." We deny this alleged fact entirely so far as it bears on the issue between Mr. Mill and ourselves, but we would beg our readers, in the first place, to remember what is that issue. We (1) heartily admit that in every single case every man's *spontaneous impulse* of will may be predicted by me (to repeat Mr. Mill's words) "with a degree of exactness

proportioned to my previous experience and knowledge of the agent, and with a certainty often quite equal to that with which I predict the commonest physical events." We further hold (2) that no person takes the trouble of resisting this impulse with any considerable energy, except only devout Theists; and we hold (3) that an exterior act may be predicted in the abstract with almost infallible certainty, in all those many cases in which there is no motive of duty or self-interest which can act in an opposite direction to the will's spontaneous impulse.\* We are confident that no power of foreseeing men's conduct can be alleged as known by experience, which presents even the superficial appearance of implying any greater certainty and uniformity of human action than might have been fully anticipated from our own doctrine "When we speak of Aristides as just," says Dr. Bain (p. 539), "of Socrates as a moral hero, of Nero as a monster of cruelty, and of the Czar Nicholas as grasping of territory, we take for granted a certain persistence and regularity as to the operation of certain motives, much the same as when we affirm the attributes of material bodies" We assent to this in its full extent, substituting only, of course, for the word "motives," the word "attractions." Dr. Bain, on his side, proceeds to admit that "the number and complication of motive forces may elude our knowledge, and render prediction uncertain and precarious." But let our readers observe this. Nowhere has Dr. Bain, nor Mr. Mill, nor (so far as we know) any other determinist whatever, attempted to show that this "uncertainty and precariousness of prediction" is due exclusively to "the number and complication of" attrac-

\* By the phrase "predicted in the abstract," we mean that it could be predicted by a person of superhuman and adequate intelligence, who should thoroughly penetrate the antecedent facts. We say with "almost" not "quite" "infallible certainty," because it may be true indeed that the exterior act prompted by my will's spontaneous impulse is not *opposed* to duty, and yet it is possible that I shall choose another in preference, as still better and more acceptable to God.

tions, that it is not largely due to the freedom of men's will. Yet until they have shown this, they have shown nothing worth so much as a pin's head towards the establishment of their theory.

On the other hand, Mr Mill refers very reasonably to "each person's observation of the voluntary actions of those with whom he comes into contact." Now, we are confident that the careful examination of such a case will be favourable to our doctrine rather than to his. We do not mean that any experiment can be made on another which is absolutely crucial and decisive, \* but we do say that such an experiment will be to Mr Mill a cause of weakness rather than of strength. Suppose such an instance as this. A widowed mother, most virtuous and wise, devotes herself exclusively to the education of her only son. She sees some critical probation of him approaching; some abnormal circumstances, from under which he will assuredly emerge, either much better or much worse than he was before. Studying carefully (as she has so long done) his temperament, tendencies, habits, she is able to calculate with a real approach to certainty what will be the impulse of his will under these circumstances, though, of course, she does not intermit doing all in her power to correct and elevate that impulse. But as to how he will comport himself under the approaching crisis—on this she is profoundly anxious. The impulse itself, she well knows, will be more or less in an evil direction: will he nobly resist? or will he, reluctantly, indeed, but effectively, succumb? She awaits with breathless solicitude the resolution of this doubt. We maintain that such a description as this is more conformable to observed facts than is Mr. Mill's allegation, viz. that she

\* We say "on another," because we have maintained that every man may make on *himself* an experiment which shall be absolutely decisive of the fact that he can resist his will's impulse

might be able (except for the imperfection of her knowledge and discernment) to predict beforehand her son's movement of will, just as she might predict the movement of a physical point solicited by divergent attractions.

We do not, however, deny that, in proportion as men have passed through the earlier part of their probation and established firm habits of virtue, in that proportion their resistance to predominant temptation (but only within certain limits) may be predicted with much confidence. But even if the power of prediction in such cases were indefinitely greater than it is, it would in no way tend to make probable Mr. Mill's theory. For consider. The whole of Mr. Mill's position rests on the allegation that men infallibly follow the most powerful attraction of those which at the moment solicit them, insomuch that the balance of pleasurable (positive or negative) may be known with infallible certainty, by observing what that direction is in which the will spontaneously moves. But when any one is said to resist predominant temptation, we mean, by the very force of the term, that he acts in *opposition* to his spontaneous impulse; that is (according to Mr. Mill's theory itself) in opposition to the balance of pleasure. Suppose, then, we could even predict with infallible certainty that in this or that given case this or that holy man would resist predominant temptation, what could be reasonably inferred from such a circumstance? *This* could reasonably be inferred from it—that the said holy man will act with infallible certainty in a way directly *opposite* to that which determinists regard as his inevitable course.

On our side, we easily explain this power of probable prediction, so far as it exists—we explain it partly on psychological, partly on theological grounds. Psychologically—a confirmed habit of resistance to predominant temptation generates a vast increase of facility and promptitude in such resistance. Theologically—he who



faithfully corresponds with grace in the earlier part of his probation, is (by way of reward) visited with larger and more persuasive supplies thereof in his later years. But all this is, of course, external to the deterministic controversy.

VIII. Mr. Mill argues "*ad homines*" from God's prescience. "The religious metaphysicians," he says ("*Logic*," vol. ii p. 422), "who have asserted the freedom of the will, have always maintained it to be consistent with God's foreknowledge of our actions, and if with divine, then with any other foreknowledge." But we deny entirely that God calculates future acts of the will through their fixed connection with phenomenal antecedents, because we deny that there is any such fixed connection. According to the "religious metaphysicians" in whom we repose confidence, God's knowledge of future human acts supposes, as its very foundation, the will's *free* exercise in this or that direction. It is strictly and fully, we maintain, within my own power, that God shall have eternally foreseen me as acting in this way or in that. Or rather God does not *foresee* anything at all, because He is external to time.\*

"Nothing to Him is present, nothing past,  
But an Eternal Now doth ever last"

IX. Determinists often imply this syllogism. "If determinism were untrue, there would be no such thing as psychological, social, historical science, but by the confession of all men there is such science, therefore determinism is true." We replied to this argument directly and expressly in our *Essay on Science, Prayer, Freewill, and Miracles*,† and must refer our readers to what we

\* "*Dei præscientia, ex doctrinâ Patrum, res liberè futuras supponit*" "In hypothesis quoddam res futuræ sint, Deus eas videre debet consequenter nempe ad liberam determinationem Cum verum sit hominem se determinaturum ad talem vel talem actionem, hoc ipso divinæ notitiæ subest" ("*Perrone de Deo*," n. 393, 400)

† This essay is republished in the second volume of this collection.—ED.

there said. Here we will only explain that we admit the existence of psychological, social, and historical science, but deny that the existence of such science is incompatible with freewill.

X. Determinists sometimes seem to imply an *a priori* argument in favour of their theory. "Since physical phenomena proceed on uniform laws"—so they seem to reason—"how incredible that psychical phenomena should proceed otherwise!" Before entering, however, on the field of thought thus opened, we will make a very brief digression. "*Naturam expellas furcâ tamen usque recurret.*" Antitheists, having no belief in the God who created all things, very often erect the uniformity of nature into a kind of deity. Theists would protest with horror against the very notion of change in God as being a horrible irreverence. Quite similarly, a very large proportion of antitheists reject, not with philosophical serenity, but with passionate outcry, the very notion of external interference with the course of phenomena, whether such interference be alleged as proceeding by way of freewill, or of miracles, or of God's constant action on phenomena in answer to prayer.

We now proceed to the particular objection which we are here to consider. As a preliminary, however, we beg to ask determinists—who nowadays are also always phenomenists—how they came to be so certain that physical phenomena *do* proceed on uniform laws. In our last essay we challenged phenomenists to prove, if they could, the uniformity of nature, by mere appeals to experience; and we answered one by one the arguments by which Mr. Mill *professed* so to prove it.

However, we ourselves, of course, entirely admit the uniformity of physical phenomena, though we contend that no proof of this truth can be derived from mere experience. We ask, then, where is the *a priori* im-

probability of the supposition that psychical phenomena differ somewhat in this respect from physical? Where, we ask, is the *a priori* difficulty in thinking that every human will has a true power of interfering with psychical uniformity of action, so far as such interference is involved in its power of self-determination? Surely the answer to this question depends altogether on the doctrine adopted concerning human morality. We quite admit that, if the utilitarian theory of morals were true, there would be a real *a priori* presumption against Freewill. But for our part, we hold that moral doctrine which we set forth to the best of our power in our third essay, we contend that mankind have full means of knowing that there is a Supreme Ruler, who imposes on them the obligation of obeying a multiform and multifarious moral law. But if this be so, it is absolutely incredible that the alternative should depend entirely on circumstances (external or internal) and in no respect on their own self-determination, whether they do or do not obey that Ruler. We believe, indeed, that most determinists will agree with us on this particular head. In fact, they are in general (we think) less keen and earnest in opposing Freewill itself than they are in opposing that doctrine on morality which we maintain to be the only true one.

XI. This brings us to the last objection which we shall consider in our present article; viz. that which turns on the connection between Freewill and moral responsibility. On this critical question, Mr. Mill concerns himself, of course, exclusively with Sir W. Hamilton's exposition of the argument; and as (for our own part) we dissent in some respects from that exposition, we must begin by setting forth in our own way the connection which we allege to exist between men's cognizance of their freewill and their cognizance of their moral responsibility.

If our readers wish thoroughly to apprehend what we

would urge on this matter, we fear we cannot exempt them from the necessity of reading our essay on the principles of morality.\* In that essay we imagined a man lying on his sick-bed, reviewing his past actions of treachery, ingratitude, injustice, unprincipled ambition, and judging as self-evidently true, that these actions have been "morally evil," "sinful," nay, detested and forbidden by an Existent Supreme Ruler. Let us now for argument's sake make a supposition, which we believe to be impossible. Let us suppose this hitherto repentant sinner to become firmly convinced, that he has had no real *power* of acting otherwise than he did, that he had been, in each particular case up to the very beginning of his life, inevitably compelled by the very laws of his nature to that particular line of conduct which he pursued.† His repentance would necessarily vanish and his judgment on his own past acts would be reversed. He would still intue clearly that such acts—if performed by a free person—would have been wicked and forbidden by a Supreme Ruler. But as he had come to think that he had not himself been a free agent, he would no more consider himself to have been *blameworthy*, than he would account a log of wood blameworthy, which had been made the cause of a frightful railway accident.

Our argument, then, is the following:—We may infer very confidently that such a repentant offender as we have described is most firmly and profoundly cognizant, through self-intimacy, of his own freedom. We may infer this truth very confidently from the fact that he so resolutely refuses, as is always found the case, to lay the flattering unction on his soul, of fancying that he has *not* been free. We do not say—as Sir W. Hamilton seems to say—that men's intuition of moral evil includes an intuition of their

\* The third essay of this collection.—ED

† The reason why we regard this as an "impossible supposition," is because we are assuming that the man is now in earnest, and that he will not therefore blind himself to manifest facts.

own free will. On the contrary, we do not regard their conviction of their own free will as being a matter of intuition at all, but as being the result of experience and self-intimacy. Our argument is this. The firm and ineradicable conviction with which any given repentant offender considers his moral intuitions to be applicable to his own acts, shows how firm and ineradicable is that conviction of his own free will which his self-intimacy has produced

We think that in hardly any part of his works has Mr. Mill displayed more signal ability than in his argument against Hamilton, from p 586 to p. 591, but on reading carefully through, not these pages only, but his whole chapter on Freewill, we cannot find any semblance of reply to the particular argument which we have here set forth.

We are sanguine that we have much strengthened our case, by considering the objections hitherto recited, having been enabled by such consideration to place our full meaning in clearer light, and to show, with greater variety of illustration, how conformable is our doctrine with experienced facts. One objection, however, remains of a very far more serious character, though it has not been adduced either by Mr Mill, Dr. Bain, or (so far as we know) by any other writer of their school. "If all men," it may be asked, "possess so real a power of resisting their will's spontaneous impulse, how does it happen that this power is by comparison so rarely and inconsiderably exercised?" Against Catholics in particular, as "*ad homines*," the same difficulty may be still more urgently pressed. "You hold that Catholics at least have full moral power, not only to avoid mortal sin, but to make the pleasing God the one predominant end of their life Yet how few and far between are those, of whom you will even allege that they do this! How amazingly few, on the supposition that all have the needful power! Again, you hold that those trained in

ignorance of religion have a true moral power—without supposing any special and authenticated Revelation—to arrive at a knowledge of the One True God. Yet how hard you will find it to lay your finger on one single heathen who in fact has done this!" The difficulty here sketched demands the most earnest attention; but its treatment will carry us into a line of thought entirely different in kind from what has occupied us in our present essay. We will therefore postpone its discussion to a future opportunity; content with having shown, by our mention of it, how very far we are from ignoring it or wishing to slur it over. For want of a better name, we will call it the "Calvinistic" difficulty.

Another objection, which we also here pass over, is founded on statistics and calculated averages, and has been borrowed by Mr. Mill (see "*On Hamilton*," p. 577) from Mr. Buckle. If the Calvinistic objection is far the strongest, Mr. Buckle's is certainly the weakest, of all which have been adduced against Freewill. In fact, it tells with its full force (whether that force be great or small) *against* those very philosophers who adduce it. But as its treatment will bring us across the same class of considerations which are suggested by the Calvinistic objection, we will treat the two in mutual connection.\*

There are no other possible replies to our argument which we can find mentioned by Mr. Mill or Dr. Bain, or which suggest themselves to our mind; but if such are adduced by any opponent, we promise to give them careful attention. Meanwhile it may be interesting to our readers, and perhaps practically serviceable, if we here give a little prospectus of what we hope to accomplish on future occa-

\* The author never carried out his intention of treating these arguments expressly, but the general drift of his view on the matter is indicated in the essay on "*The Extent of Freewill*," published in the second volume of this collection.—ED

sions. In the next essay of our series we are (1) to uphold the doctrine of causation, and then (2) to state and defend our own full doctrine on Freewill. If sufficient space still remains, we hope in the same essay to answer the two objections—the Calvinistic and the Buckleian—which we have now held over; otherwise their treatment shall commence the next following paper of our series. Then, with the full light which we shall have gained from these investigations, we shall return to a fuller elucidation of those doctrines on morality which we exhibited in the third essay of the present volume. That further elucidation, we think, will make evident two conclusions. Firstly, it will make clear, that the Catholic doctrine on morality is alone true; as distinguished, not only from utilitarianism, but from every non-utilitarian theory other than the Catholic.\* Secondly, it will show how large an array of materials for the Theistic argument will have already been brought together, even before we directly encounter antitheists on that supreme issue.

\* We need hardly say that, according to Catholic doctrine, the highest type of human virtue is that exemplified by the saints

## VII.

### APPENDIX ON FREEWILL

WE have heartily to thank the *Spectator* for a very cordial and eloquent criticism of our essay on Freewill. The criticism in question is well worthy of our readers' careful attention, and it has suggested to us a few supplementary remarks. Its principal portion runs as follows :—

Dr Ward takes the ambiguity out of the common Millite and Bainite argument for determinism, by distinguishing between the *attractions* which act involuntarily upon the will, and which really determine the character and the strength of what he, like Mr Mill and his school, calls the resultant attraction or repulsion—the spontaneous impulse which springs out of all these positive and negative attractions—and the *motives* by which he denotes any kind of resolves to act, including those which are not results of attractions or repulsions exerted on the will, but the product of the will's own force. What Dr Ward then contends is, that besides the spontaneous impulse which is the resultant of all the various involuntary attractions and repulsions exerted over the will on any one occasion, we are often conscious of “an anti-impulsive effort,” which restrains and sometimes conquers this resultant impulse, and which must therefore be due to the pure energy of the will. Of course the determinists would assert, that what Dr. Ward ascribes to anti-impulsive effort and treats as if it were exclusive of the involuntary attractions and repulsions acting upon the will, is really due to a very important, though often latent, element amongst those attractions and repulsions. The determinists allege that the action of the will is always really identical with the direction of its spontaneous impulse, which Dr. Ward earnestly denies, but the way in which the former would state their difference with him would probably be this—they



would say that Dr Ward's "anti-impulsive effort" must itself originate in some sort of desire or aversion, preference or dislike, or at least in some habit of the mind, which is now perhaps chronic, but is due to former influences of the attractive or repulsive kind, and that Dr Ward has missed its true nature, only owing to some disguise of form, which has served to merge the latent attractions or repulsions in the moral or muscular character of the struggles with opposite attractions or repulsions, to which they are apt to give rise. For example, I make what Dr. Ward means by an "anti-impulsive effort" to get up in the morning, when for a moment the resultant of all the attractions and repulsions operative on my will appears to be a "spontaneous impulse" to turn round and drop off to sleep again. But the determinists would probably regard the true rationale of such a case as something of this kind: that what seems mere free volition is nothing but a rush of involuntary force from half-hidden springs, the laziness and love of sleep being felt in every nerve, while the source of the desire or tendency by which these cravings are overpowered, is for the moment sunk beneath the surface of consciousness, and to be found in some deep-rooted conviction, or custom, or habit of the past, which at the present moment moulds my *character*, without seeming to fascinate my will.

To this, Dr Ward, as we understand him, would reply, that he has already taken into account, in computing the character of the "spontaneous impulse" of the moment, all these subtler influences radiating from past emotions or formed habits, that he has taken great pains to exclude them from the "anti-impulsive effort," and to include them in the resultant attraction or repulsion which involuntarily sways the will before the "anti-impulsive effort" is made. He would say (quite justly, as we think), that if the determinist cannot directly trace the origin of such an anti-impulsive effort to irresistible attractions and repulsions, but is quite conscious of the *plausibility* of regarding it as a living force putting forth a direct restraint over the resultant of all the complex fascinations and antipathies which spring out of our past character and tendencies, then the determinist is not arguing on the phenomena as they actually appear, but only yielding to an imperious prejudice and superstition, in insisting that what seems a pure anti-impulsive effort is but an involuntary wish or fear in disguise. The *onus probandi* clearly lies with those who assert, that what strikes us

all as a pure volition or effort of will, is really an unconscious passion or aversion the character of which we have mistaken. If we are no judges of the distinction between an involuntary attraction (negative or positive) and the dead-heave of volition, the argument fails altogether, and neither determinist nor indeterminist need attempt a problem beyond his powers. If we are judges of that distinction, then we must produce psychological evidence of the paradox, that a tendency rooted deep in character seems to us to be a mere momentary anti-impulsive effort of the will's own creation. And on this point we heartily go with the drift of Dr Ward's exposition. The whole strength of the determinist's argument lies in his fixed assumption, not in the evidence which he produces. He reasons in a circle. First, that which fascinates the will most powerfully is the strongest motive; next, the motive on which we act must be the strongest motive, and, therefore (though we don't know it), it must have fascinated the will most powerfully, and this, though so far as our consciousness answers to our self-interrogation, it had not fascinated our will at all, but rather repelled it. Dr. Ward's ingenuity, in giving a separate name to the resultant of all the involuntary attractions and repulsions acting upon our will, and then maintaining that over and above these we are constantly conscious of exerting an "anti-impulsive effort" which neutralizes the spontaneous impulse of the will, puts the vicious circular logic of the determinists in its strongest and most impressive light.

We certainly are ourselves of opinion, that the argument against determinism is more simply conclusive than our kind critic is prepared to admit. He entirely agrees with us, indeed, that determinists fail in adducing any positive ground whatever for their opinions, still, he thinks that the utmost argumentative result, which in strictness can be legitimately attained, is the disjunctive proposition: "*Either determinism is false, or the whole problem is beyond the human intellect*." We venture to hold, on the contrary, with perfect confidence, that the problem (when duly stated) not only is not beyond the human intellect, but receives a solution completely clear and unequivocal.

But on looking back at our essay under the light of

this thoughtful criticism, we arrive at the conclusion that we failed in setting forth with due emphasis, and in impressing on our readers with due detail and illustration, the fundamental distinction on which our whole argument turned—the distinction between what we called “anti-impulsive” effort or action on the one hand, and any different kind of volition on the other. We set forth that distinction indeed (as we cannot but think) clearly enough in one passage: but to set it forth clearly once for all, was by no means sufficient, and we ought to have exhibited it in more various lights and with far greater copiousness of illustration. The passage to which we refer, runs as follows:—

What we allege to be a fact of indubitable experience is this. At some given moment my will's *gravitation*, as it may be called, or spontaneous impulse, is in some given direction, insomuch that if I held myself *passively*, if I let my will alone, it would with absolute certainty move accordingly, but in *fact* I exert myself with more or less vigour to *resist* such impulse, and then the action of my will is in a different, often an entirely opposite direction. In other words, we would draw our readers' attention to the frequently occurring simultaneous existence of two very distinct phenomena. On the one hand (1), my will's gravitation or spontaneous impulse is strongly in one direction, while on the other hand, at the same moment (2) its actual movement is quite divergent from this. Now, that which “*motives*” \* affect is most evidently the will's spontaneous inclination, impulse, gravitation. The determinist, then, by saying that the will's movement is infallibly determined by “*motives*,” is obliged to say that the will never moves in opposition to its spontaneous impulse. And in fact he does say this. All determinists assume, as a matter of course, that the will never puts forth effort for the purpose of resisting its spontaneous impulse. We, on the contrary, allege that there is no mental fact more undeniable than the frequent putting forth of such effort.

\* For convenience' sake, in this paragraph we used the word “*motives*” as determinists do

Our chief object, then, in the following pages is to set forth, as clearly and unmistakably as we can, the distinction intended in this passage; a distinction on which our whole argument rests. Our readers may remember, that we called by the name of an "attraction" "every thought which proposes some pleasure, positive or negative, to be gained by some act or course of action" This terminology being understood, it is very plain (we added) "that every man during by far the greater part of his life is solicited by conflicting attractions, and it is further a manifest and undeniable fact, that, in the very large majority of such instances, a certain definite and decisive inclination or impulse of the will spontaneously ensues" The attraction, to which this inclination or impulse corresponds, we have called the "predominating" attraction, and the allegation of ours, on which our whole argument rested, was this. Very often, no doubt, men act in *accordance* with this spontaneous impulse, and *yield* to this predominant attraction; but by no means unfrequently they *resist* this impulse, and put forth what we have called anti-impulsive effort. This last fact it is which the determinist (as we shall presently point out) is obliged by his doctrine to deny. What we wish first of all to make clear, is the broad and unmistakable contrast which exists between that class of phenomena which he is obliged to deny, and that other class which he willingly admits. Or, putting the same consideration in a somewhat different shape, we wish to make clear that "desire" is one thing, "resolve" another thing; and that men not unfrequently both "resolve" and act, in *opposition* to their "desire" And as such is the principal purpose for which we are writing this Appendix, our readers must excuse us, should we become tedious by having recourse to some variety of homely illustration.

I A youth is very unhappy at school his studies are

distasteful, his companions uncongenial, and his teachers unsympathetic. His mind naturally dwells on these facts ; and by degrees he comes to feel a strong desire, of not waiting for vacation time, but running away at once. If this continues, he will soon be scheming how to effect his desire. But he suddenly remembers, that the home, to which he might perhaps escape to-morrow, would be a very different home from what it is in vacation time. There would be no smiles of welcome and plans for his amusement, but in their stead stern reproof and enforced return to school. This negative attraction—the thought of this pain—entirely preponderates over the earlier, and changes his state of mind altogether.

Now, let us dwell for a moment on this latter state of mind.\* In the earlier stage he really *desired* to leave school at once, but in the later stage it would be absurd to say that he desires it at all. Doubtless he may feel, as keenly as he did before, the evils of school ; but what he *desires* under existing circumstances is to stay there. His inclination towards the immediate leaving school may be called (if you will) an “optation ;” \* but it cannot be called a desire. Or (putting the same thing in another way), there is no need of *self-restraint*, to keep him at school, for he has no real desire of leaving it. There is no need of self-restraint in order that he may act in accordance with his spontaneous impulse and do just what he desires.

Now, let us make a different supposition. At home his only parent is an indulgent mother, who is sure at any time to receive him with open arms. Still, she has imbued him with firm religious principle, which has been much strengthened (let us say) by the religious discipline of the school itself. Accordingly the thought soon spontaneously

\* From “optarem,” “I should desire it,” were it not for its accompaniments. The recognized Catholic word “velleity” is far more expressive, but it does not express the precise idea in the text.

enters his mind that he would gain far more real good where he is, and that his staying is far more accordant with the Will of God. Now, as we observed in our essay, "to those who have trained themselves in virtue, virtue itself supplies an attraction; often an exceedingly powerful one." It may well happen, therefore, that the various attractions offered him in pleasing God may predominate over the attraction which solicits him to leaving school, and that here, again, his true desire is to stay.

But another supposition is at least equally possible. The attraction, which solicits him towards running away, may predominate over the attraction of pleasing God; and his real desire may accordingly be to leave school. From the motive,\* however, of virtue and permanent self-interest, he sets himself to *resist* that which is his spontaneous impulse and real desire; in conformity with his *resolve* to aim at a certain end he contends against the *desire*, which of itself would lead him to act in *opposition* to that end. Here is a case in which "self-restraint" really does come in. As soon as he intermits for one moment his watchfulness and self-restraint, his desire asserts its supremacy, and impels his will in its own direction. To cease struggling with himself is to give up the cause of virtue and self-interest. We do not at all mean that this state of things will probably continue very long; because he will do all he can to effect that the preponderance of attraction shall be in favour of the end which he has resolved to pursue. But we say that this state of mind, while it lasts, is most unmistakably heterogeneous from that which we last described. Surely no two phenomena can be more clamorously distinct

\* According to our use of terms, to ask what is my "motive" for some action, is to ask what is that end which I have resolved to pursue, and for the sake of which I resolve on the performance of that action. But if a determinist asks me what is my "motive" in some action, he means to ask me what is that pleasure the desire of which allures me to do what I do. See p. 246.

from each other—more impossible to be mutually confused—than the two which we are contrasting. To resist one's immediate desire on the one hand, or to gratify it on the other hand—to practise self-restraint on one hand, or to practise no self-restraint on the other hand—these (where distinctly exhibited) are not merely dissimilar, but violently contrasted phenomena.

II. We choose for our second illustration a case in which the motive of resistance is not virtue at all, but mere worldly interest. I live with an old aunt, from whom I expect a large legacy. I go to a concert with her full permission, on promise of being most faithfully back by a certain hour. While I am in the very height of enjoyment at a symphony of Beethoven's, my neighbour happens to announce the time, and I find I must start at once, and make great haste too, if I am not to give my aunt grievous offence, and imperil the fruit of years' assiduity. It is most probable that I shall start off without delay, but two alternatives are possible as to my *state of mind* in starting. It may be that the dismay with which I contemplate the threatened calamity entirely counterbalances the opposite attraction. I make frantic efforts to push my way out, regardless of my neighbour's convenience, the strains of Beethoven are to me almost as though they did not exist; at most, my inclination to hear more of them is no more than a mere option. On the other hand, it may be that those strains still constitute my preponderating attraction, and that reason has to contend against predominant passion. My *resolve*, however, is firm not to offend the old lady, and I exert vigorous anti-impulsive effort: nevertheless, my will is still under the fascination of the music; and as long as that is within hearing, if I intermit my effort for a moment, I tarry on my way. During the whole of my passage to the outward air, I am *desiring* to return, though *resolved* to depart, nor is it till the music is out of

hearing that this conflict ceases. Now, no one can possibly say that the two mental states which we have described are similar to each other ; for it is most manifest that they are violently contrasted. Self-restraint is the principal feature in the latter case, while it is entirely absent in the former.

III. Our next illustration shall be for the purpose of explaining that the present issue does not turn at all on the question whether *effort* is put forth by the agent, but only *anti-impulsive* effort. With this view, we will recur in the first instance to the illustration which we derived from the demeanour in battle of some courageous soldier. He will often put forth intense effort, brave appalling perils, confront the risk of an agonizing death. But to what end is this effort directed? He puts it forth in order that he may act in full accordance with his spontaneous present impulse, that he may gratify what is his strongest wish, his real desire ; in order that he may overcome the enemy, obtain fame and distinction, avoid the reproach of cowardice, etc. Such efforts as these we may call "congenial" efforts. But now take the instance of a military officer—possessing real piety and steadfastly purposing to grow therein—who receives at the hand of a brother officer some stinging and (as the world would say) "intolerable" insult. His nature flames forth, his spontaneous impulse, his real present desire, is to inflict some retaliation, which shall at least deliver him from the "reproach" of cowardice. Nevertheless, it is his firm resolve, by God's grace, to comport himself Christianly. His resolve contends vigorously against his desire, until the latter is brought into harmony with his principles. Here, then, are two cases, which agree with each other as being cases of intense effort ; but the former is "congenial" effort, while the latter is "anti-impulsive." What is most remarkable in the last-named officer is, his "self-restraint ;" but it would be simply absurd to talk of self-restraint in the former



instance. No one who considers ever so little can overlook the fundamental contrast between the two cases.

Doubtless it may happen—perhaps it not unfrequently happens—that a soldier's pluck and courage may fail him for the moment on some most sanguinary field, and that he reinforces them by anti-impulsive effort. But the cases to which we drew attention as illustrating "congenial" effort are the far more numerous cases in which nothing of the kind occurs.

One further explanation should here be made. We do not deny that there may be sometimes difficulty in deciding whether this or that given effort be "congenial" or "anti-impulsive;" but these will always be instances belonging to what may be called the border-land. In such a case, the attractions on either side do not greatly differ in power; and it requires careful self-inspection to determine on which side the balance preponderates. To take the common illustration, what can be more mutually contrasted than the respective shapes of a straight line and a circle? And yet the small arc of a very large circle is often quite indistinguishable from a straight line. But though it sometimes happens that the anti-impulsive effort is so slight as not to be easily recognized for what it is, it happens quite as often that such effort is so intense as to force its true character on the notice of the most casual observer. We cannot too often repeat that if there be such a thing in the world as anti-impulsive effort, determinism is overthrown. We are not at all concerned, therefore, to maintain that in *all* cases, but only that in *some* cases, the putting forth of such effort is an indisputable fact.

IV. We will next repeat the particular illustration cited from us by our kind critic in the *Spectator*, with the view of more distinctly confronting the difficulty which he expresses. A rises at a given time on some given morning with simplest promptitude and alacrity under the influence of a firmly

acquired habit, though he experiences at the moment more pain than pleasure in so doing. How is this to be psychologically explained? According to Mr. Mill and Dr. Bain, the explanation is such as the following; and we are entirely disposed to think it correct. It is true enough, then, that the rising gives him *at the moment* more pain than pleasure, but, at the same time, he is keenly conscious that his lying longer in bed would, on the whole, entail on him greater suffering than his getting up. His real desire, then, is to rise from bed. He needs no "self-restraint" in order that he may get up, but he *would* need "self-restraint" in order that he should voluntarily lie in bed.

Now consider, on the other hand, the case of B. His desire—his preponderating and spontaneous impulse—is to lie in bed; but he *resolves*, from some motive or other, to get up. In order to fulfil that resolve he exerts himself, and puts forth anti-impulsive effort; he exercises manly self-restraint and forces himself to rise, though it be but laboriously and against the grain. A starts from bed by a spontaneous and indeliberate impulse; but B resolves and fails, resolves and fails again, until he at last succeeds by a crowning effort in launching himself on the sea of active life. Surely no mental states are more unmistakably contrasted than these two.

According to the *Spectator*, however, the determinists would reply, "that what seems free volition" in B's case "is nothing but a rush of involuntary force from half-hidden springs; the laziness and love of sleep being felt in every nerve, while the source of the desire or tendency, by which these cravings are overpowered, is for the moment sunk beneath the surface of consciousness, and to be found in some deep-rooted conviction, or custom, or habit of the past, which at the present moment moulds his character without seeming to fascinate his will." We must say for

ourselves that we cannot see the slightest plausibility in such a reply. We will go all possible lengths in heartily admitting that the will is often very powerfully affected by influences, which are for the moment—or permanently, if you will—sunk beneath the surface of consciousness. The same thought of pleasure and pain shall occur with equal vividness to Y and Z; and yet it shall impel Y towards action with immeasurably greater power than that with which it impels Z, because of various circumstances in his temperament and past history. Still, look at the matter which way you will, all that these convictions, and habits, and customs, and temperament can even imaginably do is to effect that the *desire*—the spontaneous and preponderating impulse—be this rather than that. But that act of self-restraint or anti-impulsive effort, on which we are throughout insisting, *presupposes* the spontaneous impulse as already existing; nor does it come into action at all, until *after* the desire exists, until habits, temperament, circumstances, have done their work.\* Here, precisely as before, to act *in accordance with* my desire is one thing, and to *resist* my desire is just the opposite thing. Nor is there the most distant approach towards lessening the saliency

\* An objection may be raised against what is said in the text, which it will be more satisfactory expressly to notice. Suppose I desire some given course of action, M; and suppose I nevertheless resist that desire, from the motive of virtuousness or of my permanent self-interest. This motive of virtue or self-interest—so the objector may argue—on entering my mind becomes in itself an attraction, and may probably enough (on the very principles of determinism) preponderate over the opposite attractions. We answer, that such cases, undoubtedly, are by no means uncommon, but that they are not the cases on which we rest our argument. If the new attraction preponderates over its rivals, then my *desire* is no longer for course M, though I may have an *optation* towards that course. In such a case, therefore, although the action which I elicit is opposite to that which *just previously* I had desired, nevertheless, at the moment of action my desire and my action are in perfect mutual accordance. But the cases on which we insist are those in which it is manifest that I *resolve* and *act* in direct opposition to what (at the very moment of acting) I *desire*. The undeniable existence of such cases is the fact on which we rest as fatal to determinism.

and impressiveness of this contrast, whether the desire has been generated by obvious and recognized influences, or by influences partially or entirely latent.\*

V. There is one doctrine implied in what we have just been saying, which it will nevertheless be more satisfactory expressly to set forth. It has reference to what we called in our essay "non-emotional attractions." It would be quite unfair to allege that, according to determinists, my action is always determined by that "motive" (as they call it) which is accompanied by the *most vivid picture* of pleasure for the moment. On the contrary, they hold, even as a prominent part of their doctrine, that a thought of pleasure or pain may exercise immense influence towards action, while causing, nevertheless, little or no emotion. We took every pains (we trust) to treat this part of their theory with full justice. Take the preceding instance of A rising from bed. The pain of rising may be far more vividly presented to his *imagination* than the pain of lying in bed. Nevertheless, what precisely results from his confirmed *habit* of early rising is, (1) that the pain of lying in bed would, in fact, be found (when the time came) to be greater than the present pain of getting up, and (2) that this eventual predominance of pain is at this moment duly and influentially appreciated by his practical reason.† Determinists undoubtedly are quite explicit in urging this consideration; and (as we have often said) we are entirely disposed so far to agree with them.

In like manner, suppose I have acquired in great strength what Mr. Mill calls a habit of virtue, i.e. a habit of benevolence. It will happen again and again that I *spontaneously* practise what in some sense may be called self-sacrifice; that is, I deny myself some great pleasure or

\* See what we observed in our notes at pp 243, 244, 248, 249

† It will be sufficiently clear here from the context what we mean by this term "practical reason," and it is not worth while to treat at any great length a matter on which we are entirely at one with determinists.

endure some great pain for the sake of benefiting my fellow-men. Moreover, I do this, though the pleasure which I forego, or the pain which I endure, is painted on my imagination with immeasurably greater vividness than is the pleasure which I shall enjoy from acting beneficently, or the pain which I should suffer from acting in a different way.\* We need not here give the explanation of this phenomenon; because to do so would only be to repeat, almost word for word, the explanation which we just now gave.

We entirely agree with determinists on the existence of such phenomena as these, but we say that they do not tend ever so remotely to discredit the argument on which we have insisted. In the former of our two instances, my real desire was to get up; and my inclination towards lying in bed was a mere optation. In the latter case my real desire was to practise self-sacrifice, and I had no more than an optation towards the contrary self-indulgence. It still remains absolutely true, then, that, according to determinists, men by the very constitution of their nature are inevitably determined to do what they really desire. See Mr. Mill's express language quoted by us already. Though we find no pleasure in such or such an action, he says, "we still continue to *desire* it, and *consequently* to do it." "I dispute altogether that we are conscious of being able to act in opposition to the strongest present desire or aversion."

In one word. The whole deterministic controversy turns on this one question: "Do I, or do I not, at various times exercise self-restraint? do I, or do I not, at various times act in resistance (not to a mere optation, but) to my real desire?" What can "motives," † or "circumstances," or "temperament," or "habit," or "custom" imaginably do

\* See the passages which we quoted from Mr. Mill, in pp. 242, 244, note.

† In the sense in which determinists use that word.

for me, except to effect that my *desire* shall be this rather than that? How can they imaginably influence my action in those cases where my action is *contrary* to my desire? If, then, there *are* such cases, if it be true that I often act in *opposition* to what at the moment is my real desire, then it demonstratively follows that my will at such times acts for itself; independently of "pleasure," or "pain," or "circumstances," or "temperament," or anything else.

And on this critical point we appeal confidently to the experience of any man who will honestly examine his past and present consciousness. The question to which our essay was directed throughout was the question we have first named. "Do men ever resist a real desire? Is there such a thing as self-restraint?" He would be an unusually bold man who, fairly confronting this question, should answer it in the negative; but to answer it in the affirmative is to reject determinism in every possible shape.

It is urgently important, however, in reference to the course of argument which we hope to pursue in future essays, to make thoroughly manifest that determinism is absolutely nowhere, as the saying is; that it is not only demonstratively, but even visibly and palpably false. We had rather, therefore, run the risk of saying many words too much than of saying one word too little. And in accordance with this feeling, we will conclude by drawing out in form the argument on which we have insisted, whether in our original essay or in this Appendix.

The determinist reasoning, when analyzed, will be found to consist of two propositions.

Prop. 1st. "Every man's desire at any given moment is infallibly determined by circumstances (1) internal and (2) external; i.e. (1) by the intrinsic constitution and tendency of his mind, and (2) by the external influences which at the moment act on it."

Prop. 2nd. "Every man's will at any given moment is infallibly determined as to its action by the *desire* which prevails in his mind at that moment."

From these two propositions taken together, the deterministic conclusion obviously follows, viz. that every man's will is infallibly determined by circumstances internal and external, as to its action at any given moment.

Moreover, not only this is *in fact* the reasoning of a determinist, but there is no other reasoning on which he can *possibly* rely. It is most obvious that circumstances cannot *determine* a man's will to some action, except by *disposing* it thereto; or, in other words, that they cannot determine his *action*, except by determining his *desire*. His desire, indeed, in many cases, may be negative and not positive; or, in other words, he may desire some course of action not as being in itself attractive, but as being less *unattractive* than any practicable alternative. Then, again, when we speak of "desire," we by no means refer exclusively to what is sometimes called "conscious" desire. There are very many active impulses which lead so immediately to action that they cannot be reflected on as distinct from the action to which they spontaneously and irresistibly lead. We include all these impulses under the general name "desire." And all this being understood, it is most evident that the determinist reasoning must consist of the two propositions above recited. If a man's *action* is infallibly determined by circumstances, this can only be because (1) his *desire* is infallibly determined by them, and because (2) his action is infallibly determined by his desire.

With the former of the two propositions we are entirely disposed to concur. Not only so, but we are disposed to concur with it in the particular shape in which Mr. Mill and Dr. Bain maintain it. Subject to the explanations they give of their own meaning, we are quite disposed to agree with them, that what determines a man's desire at

any given moment is the balance of pleasure contemplated by him at that moment. As we observed in our essay, we think that that constant gravitation towards immediate pleasure, which observation testifies as characteristic of humanity, gives these writers a thoroughly solid foundation for this part of their doctrine.

It has been, then, against the *second* proposition of determinists that our whole argument has been directed. We most confidently deny that at every given moment every man's action is infallibly determined by the desire which prevails in him at that moment. No doubt (1) there are very many instances in which a man *does* act in harmony with his prevailing desire. There are (2) other (we are confident) and very numerous instances in which anti-impulsive effort is really put forth and anti-impulsive action follows, but in which this circumstance does not so force itself on an observer's notice but that determinists may plausibly doubt it. But our main purpose throughout has been to show (3) that there are other instances in which it is seen with clearest evidence—in which no one not flagrantly uncandid can possibly doubt—that a man acts in *opposition* to his present prevailing desire. Indeed, with one particular class of men, viz. devout Theists, the phenomena of anti-impulsive effort are among the commonest and most unmistakable phenomena in the whole world. But even if, instead of this vast multitude, there were but *one* such phenomenon on absolutely certain record, that one phenomenon would suffice to overthrow the deterministic doctrine. If Mr. Mill admitted that one single man on one single occasion resisted his prevalent desire, that philosopher could not maintain it to be an invariable law of human nature that men's actions are infallibly *determined* by their desires.

We are the last to deny that indubitable truths are often encountered by objections of real force, nay, of very



great force. It may happen from time to time, we quite admit, that some conclusion is established with absolute certainty, insomuch that any one would act unreasonably (and perhaps with grave culpability) if he failed to yield it the most absolute and unreserved assent; while at the same time objections remain unsolved, which, if they stood alone, would tend to make this very conclusion more or less improbable. Here is one of the intellectual trials to which God—doubtless for wisest purposes of probation—exposes speculative thinkers. As we proceed indeed with our present series of essays, we shall come across more than one such truth as we have just described. But what we here wish to point out is, that there is nothing of this kind as regards the objections brought by Mr. Mill or Dr. Bain against indeterminism. Let any one rightly understand what such writers affirm; and let him then proceed to look at the most obvious and every-day facts of life;—he will be able to discern with the clearest evidence, that their pretentious theory is a mere sham and delusion.

## VIII.

### MR. MILL ON CAUSATION.\*

CONSIDERING the point at which our argument has now arrived, it will be perhaps conducive to clearness if, before proceeding further, we address a few preliminary words of recapitulation and explanation to our Catholic readers.

The preceding essays form part of a projected series—as yet far from being concluded—the purpose of which is to establish securely on argumentative ground, against the antitheists of this day, the existence of that Personal and Infinitely Perfect Being whom Christians designate by the name “God.” This is a task peculiarly needed at the present moment, when the whole stream of speculative irreligion tends vigorously to denial of a Personal God. We trust that our arguments, as far as they have gone, will hold their own against all gainsayers, but the particular thinkers whom we have kept specially in mind are those called “phenomenists.”

It is the characteristic tenet of these persons (and hence their name) that the knowledge possessed by any human being is confined to his apprehension of phenomena—whether physical or psychical, exclusively *as* phenomena; that any given intellectual avouchment is cognized by him as a phenomenon, and as nothing more; or, in other

\* *A System of Logic*. By JOHN STUART MILL. Eighth Edition. London: Longmans

*An Examination of Sir W Hamilton's Philosophy*. By JOHN STUART MILL. Fourth Edition. London: Longmans.

words, that no intellectual avouchment can give him any reliable information, except of its own existence and characteristics.\* For various reasons, we selected Mr. Stuart Mill as the special representative of this school, and there is no doubt that, when we began our series, he held far the highest place among them in the world's judgment. His "Autobiography," in fact, and his "Essays on Religion," have had so damaging an effect on his reputation, that it is now difficult to realize how "facile princeps" of irreligious speculators he was accounted in 1871. But for our own part, we still think that his former eminence was well deserved, as regards any intellectual comparison between himself and his brother phenomenists. His death, as we have more than once said, was to us a matter of severe controversial disappointment, because we were full of confidence that a signal triumph must have accrued to the cause of truth had we succeeded in inducing him to put forth his utmost strength against us. At the same time, though we cannot now obtain that great advantage, we shall still take him as direct representative of the school which we are directly assailing; while we shall from time to time illustrate his position by citations from others who agree with him.

As we call Mr. Mill's school "phenomenists," we may with equal propriety call their opponents "intuitionists." An "intuition" (as we use the term) is simply "an intellectual avouchment, reliably declaring as immediately evident some truth other than the mere existence and characteristics of such avouchment." A "phenomenist," then, precisely as such, denies that there are such mental facts as "intuitions;" and any one therefore who denies

\* "The notion that truths external to the mind may be known by intuition or consciousness, independently of observation and experience, is, I am persuaded, in these times the great intellectual support of false doctrines and bad institutions" (Mr Stuart Mill's "Autobiography," p. 225 See also p. 273)

phenomenism, *ipso facto* upholds the existence of certain "intuitions."

Now, it is most easy for an intuitionist to show by a stroke of the pen that phenomenism cannot be accepted with full consistency. For (as we have repeatedly asked) what is an act of *memory*, except an intellectual avouchment? On phenomenist principles, then, an act of memory gives me no reliable information, except of its own existence and characteristics; and consequently it gives me no ground whatever for knowing, nay, even for reasonably guessing, what have been my past impressions and thoughts. I have very often that present *impression*, which I call an act of most clear and articulate memory; but, according to phenomenism, I cannot know—I cannot legitimately even guess—that this present impression corresponds to a past *fact*. It is some years since we first urged prominently this objection against phenomenism; and, as far as we know, no phenomenist whosoever, looking that objection in the face, has attempted to answer it. Mr. Mill certainly noticed our argument and *professed* to meet it: but (as we pointed out in our essay on his reply) the question to which he replied was not less than "fundamentally different from the question which we had asked."

But, though an argumentum ad hominem against the phenomenists is so very easily effected, it seemed to us of vital importance that the conflict with phenomenism should be carried very much further than this. Even as regards the phenomenists themselves, no one can suppose that their power of doing mischief is neutralized by a demonstration of their inconsistency. The most reasonable thinker in the world—even while entirely seeing that their system, as a whole, is self-contradictory—might attach great weight to this or that individual objection alleged by them against Theism, and might desire its refutation. Moreover, the present profoundly disorganized state of

thought renders it, in our humble judgment, the one pressing philosophical need of our time, that that very course of argument be pursued, which controversy with phenomenists implies. They admit, it may be said, no first principle whatever. If, then, we are to defend Theism in a controversy against *them*, we must take nothing whatever for granted; we must set forth, link by link, the whole chain of argument, by which (as we contend) our conclusion is conclusively established. But the careful performance of this task, as we just now said, is (to our mind) on other grounds, also the one philosophical necessity of our time, and phenomenists, therefore, have unintentionally conferred a very important service on philosophy, by compelling their opponents to its execution. We wish we could ourselves more competently satisfy this pressing philosophical necessity, but, at all events, we may be of service in suggesting a track, which others hereafter shall more successfully pursue.

Now, there is a distinction between that order of arrangement which such a purpose requires, and that order of arrangement which is commonly adopted by Catholic philosophers: and we wish our Catholic readers to bear in mind the nature of this distinction. We have on former occasions dwelt on a vitally important doctrine, inculcated by Catholic philosophers. The Catholic holds, not only, of course, that reason is the gift of God, but also that every single adult is (except for his own grave sin) led by his reason, energizing, at least, implicitly, to the sure and certain knowledge of various truths, which are of vital importance to his well-being here and hereafter. So momentous is this doctrine, that we think the issue of the fundamental conflict between religion and unbelief will turn practically on the alternative, whether the said doctrine be accepted or rejected. We would refer our Catholic readers to an article in the *Dublin Review*, for October, 1874, as

setting forth both our precise meaning in this statement, and also our ground for making it.\*

The purpose, then, at which a Catholic philosopher commonly aims in his treatises, is not entirely the same with that which our own controversy with phenomenists obliges us to pursue. He desires to place before his reader a map and exhibition of the various verities, which reason suffices to establish, and the order in which he exhibits those verities is that which he judges most appropriate for impressing them on the student's intelligence. As regards the most fundamental of their number, it is not his business to *convince* the learner of their truth, because the learner is known to be already convinced; but rather to give him the power of contemplating and exhibiting to himself that knowledge, which he already possesses. And although of course the teacher adduces arguments for each successive conclusion, he is content to derive such arguments from those various other philosophical doctrines which he knows to be common ground between the student and himself.

Now, though this method is probably more suitable than any other to the end at which he aims, our readers will at once see that, unless great care be taken, it may here and

\* Dr Mivart, in his admirable "Lessons from Nature," has the following remark (p 5) — "When any man has become a victim to doubt, he has no rational choice, as he has no duty, but to reason out his doubts to the end; to seek to escape them by diverting his attention, or to obscure them by calling up a cloud of emotion, is not only useless but blameworthy." We are quite sure the excellent author does not intend to say what his words, nevertheless, may be misunderstood to mean. Suppose a person of ordinary or less than ordinary intellectual education has permitted himself to be carried away for a period by the stream of antitheism, and has become a "victim to doubt" or to worse than doubt. What means has God given him of recovery? We have indicated what seems to us the true reply in the article mentioned in the text. But it is surely an undeniable fact of human nature that none except a very small minority are intellectually competent to philosophical inquiries. With the great mass of men it would be the most grotesque child's play if they gravely professed to explore and mutually balance the arguments adducible for and against God's Existence, with a view to discovering for themselves the truth by argumentative investigation.

there involve an argumentative "*petitio principii*." It may possibly happen that when doctrine A is in question, doctrine B shall be alleged as a proof thereof, and that when (a volume later, perhaps) doctrine B comes to be considered, doctrine A in turn shall occupy the place of premiss. But in controversial philosophy—as distinct from the philosophy set forth by a Catholic addressing Catholics—a "*petitio principii*" is the one most fatal of flaws. And the philosophical series in which we are engaged is precisely controversial; for it is intended as offering humble suggestions to Catholics, as to the arguments available against the desolating scepticism now so widely prevalent. *Here* it is comparatively of minor importance, whether the truths on which we insist be arranged in the order best suited for their full apprehension, while, on the other hand, it is the most urgent of necessities, that every step be thoroughly made good before proceeding to another.

Of the successive steps which are thus to be made good, the first, on which all else depends, consists in refuting the characteristic tenet of phenomenism. As we have so often pointed out, if this tenet were true—if it were true that no intellectual avouchment reliably declares as immediately evident aught except its own existence—it would follow that no man has the power of knowing, nay, or of even reasonably guessing, what<sup>\*</sup> has been any one of his past experiences, he has no power of knowing, or even reasonably guessing, any fact in the present or the past, excepting the phenomena of his momentarily present consciousness. We began our series, then, by laying down—in opposition to this desolating scepticism—what we regard as the true "*rule and motive of certitude*." We maintained that whatever a man's existent cognitive faculties, if rightly interrogated and interpreted, avouch as certain, is thereby known to him as certain. This proposition we call "the

principle of certitude ;" and it is the *first* principle of all possible knowledge.

Here, however, it may be useful to subjoin an explanation. The principle of certitude is not a "logical," but what may be called an "implicit and concomitant," first principle. Take the case which we have often supposed. I am at this moment comfortably warm, but have the clearest memory that a very few minutes ago I was out in the cold. My absolutely certain knowledge that a very short time ago I experienced the sensation of cold—this knowledge is not an inference from premisses. No syllogism, *e g* , of the following type, has passed through my mind. "Whatever my cognitive faculties declare as certain, is really certain; but they declare as certain that I was recently cold, therefore, etc." Such a syllogism, we say, does not in the least represent the ground of my conviction. On the contrary, I am far more immediately certain of the particular proposition that I was recently cold, than of the general proposition that whatever my cognitive faculties avouch as certain is really so. The present act of memory is immediately known by me, with keenest certitude, to correspond with a fact truly past, and I infer the general principle of certitude, by means of reflecting on this and a thousand similar data. We make, in passing, this obvious remark, because we think it tends to harmonize mutually certain dicta of different Catholic philosophers, which on the surface present an appearance of discrepancy.

This principle of certitude, then, is the most fundamental of those truths, which it is requisite to make good against phenomenists. But there is a second, almost equally fundamental. Theists regard Theism as a *necessary* verity; and we have, therefore, to maintain, as the final conclusion of our argument, that God necessarily exists. But if the idea "necessary" be contained in the conclusion, it is indispensable for the validity of the reasoning that the



same idea be contained in one or more of the premisses. Nor, indeed, is it sufficient that one or more of the premisses be a *necessary* truth: it is further requisite that one or more of the premisses be a *necessary ampliative* truth. By an "ampliative" proposition, as we have often explained, we mean one which expresses what is neither explicitly nor implicitly expressed in the subject. Any merely "explicative" proposition—as soon as the sense of the terms is fully understood—at once assumes the shape "A is A." Now, though the proposition "A is A" be indubitably a necessary truth, no combination of such propositions as "A is A," "B is B," "C is C"—though they went through all the letters of a thousand alphabets—could issue argumentatively in any conclusion beyond themselves. In order, therefore, to establish the conclusion that "God necessarily exists," one or more of our premisses must be a necessary ampliative proposition. Here, therefore, we are again brought into conflict with a fundamental tenet of the phenomenists; for they deny that any ampliative proposition whatever is cognizable as necessary.\*

The second, then, of our two fundamental propositions is, that the human mind has a power on occasion of certainly and immediately cognizing necessary ampliative truths as such. Phenomenists deny this proposition, and intuitionists maintain it. On no field can this battle be so decisively fought out as on the field of *mathematical* axioms. There are several reasons why we think this; and Mr. Fitzjames Stephen has incidentally mentioned a strong one. "The words which relate to time, space, and number," he says, "are perfectly simple and adequate to what they describe, whereas the words which relate to common objects are nearly in every case complex, often to

\* It is not easy to find out whether they admit the proposition "A is A" to be necessary, we doubt, indeed, whether they have looked the question in the face.

the highest degree." On the other hand, there is no part of his case which Mr. Mill more carefully elaborated than that which concerns mathematical axioms. He accounted "the chief strength" of the intuitionist philosophy "in morals, politics, and religion," to lie in "its appeal to the evidence of mathematics." To expel it thence, he adds, "is to drive it from its stronghold" ("*Autobiography*," p. 226), and he put forth, accordingly, his very utmost strength for the accomplishment of this task. This was one special reason which led us to encounter him hand to hand on this particular ground. Mr. Mill, feeling the vital importance of the issue, replied promptly to our arguments; and Mr. Fitzjames Stephen, at a later period, assailed us from a somewhat different point of view. On our side, we thought it indispensable to reply; \* so that, as it happened, this particular constituent of our argument was swelled to a somewhat disproportionate size.

We here, then, assume ourselves to have been successful in showing that the human mind has a power of cognizing immediately certain necessary ampliative truths as such. Now, further, no one will doubt that, if any such truths be cognizable, the validity of the syllogistic process is among their number. In proposing, then, to establish Theism argumentatively against phenomenists, what we propose is this. We are first to lay down certain ampliative truths, which we shall maintain to be immediately cognizable as necessary, drawing out such an appeal to the phenomena of man's intellectual nature as shall show us to be well warranted in so maintaining. Then, combining these truths with the facts of experience, we are to infer, as legitimately resulting from this assemblage of self-evident truths and experienced facts, that God certainly exists.

As we apprehend our position, the chief premisses

\* The reply to Sir James (then Mr.) Stephen is not republished in this collection.—EDITOR.

needed for our argument are divisible into three classes: we need (1) certain truths in regard to morality, (2) certain truths in regard to causation, and (3) certain truths in regard to human freewill. Immediately after our article on necessary truths, and before Mr. Mill had replied to that article, we entered on the first of these classes, and we proved, we trust, so much as this, viz. that certain moral verities are cognizable as necessary. There are further doctrines concerning morality, which it will be important to point out and elucidate, but before approaching these, it was desirable to consider freewill. The establishment of this truth against phenomenists required the establishment of two conclusions, one psychological and the other metaphysical. Phenomenists allege, as a matter of experience (to use Mr. Mill's words) that "volitions follow determinate moral antecedents with the same uniformity and the same certainty as physical effects follow their physical cause." This is the tenet of determinism.\* We argued against it in our last essay but one, and supplemented our reasoning by some further remarks. We called our own adverse position by the name "*indeterminism*," being the purely negative position that volitions are *not* certainly determined by psychical antecedents. But freewill includes another doctrine besides that of indeterminism, it includes the doctrine that man is a self-determining cause of volition. And this proposition, of course, cannot be treated until we have considered the question of causation. The principle of causation, then, is to occupy us in our present essay.

Now, at starting, we must refer to one among the most signal proofs Mr. Mill has ever given of his deficiency in philosophical discernment. The sense in which he uses the word "cause" is as simply different from that in which

\* All phenomenists are determinists, but the converse by no means holds, that all determinists are phenomenists.

intuitionists use it as is the word "box," when signifying a "shooting-box" or an "opera-box." \* We do not say that he is entirely unaware of this fact; but we do say that he constantly fails to bear it in mind on occasions when, for want of his doing so, his whole argument becomes simply unmeaning.† This obstacle, then, against a mutual understanding must at once be removed; and our first undertaking shall be, therefore, to make as clear as we can what Mr. Mill means by a "cause." With him, the idea of "cause" is essentially based on that doctrine which is called "the uniformity of nature;" and if nature—that is, visible and phenomenal nature, physical or psychical—did not proceed uniformly, there would be no such thing as a "cause" at all. This is so undeniably his terminology, that the very same truth which is sometimes called by him "the uniformity of nature" is elsewhere called by him "the law of universal causation." We must begin, then, by considering (1) what phenomenists mean when they affirm that nature proceeds uniformly, and (2) how far we can ourselves concur with the proposition which they thus intend to express.

The phenomenist doctrine, on the uniformity of nature, may easily be expressed with sufficient precision for our present purpose. "Between the phenomena which exist at any instant," says Mr. Mill, ("Logic," i. 377), "and the phenomena which exist at the succeeding instant, there is an invariable order of succession." His whole theory, indeed, of inductive logic (ii. 95) "depends on the assumption that every event, or the beginning of every phenomenon, must have some antecedent, on the existence of

\* We do not at all forget that every one, in writing on political or social subjects, uses the word "cause" in Mr. Mill's sense, as *eg* when it is asked "What were the causes of the French Revolution?" or "What are the causes of high wages?" But in philosophical discussions the case is quite otherwise.

† See, as a signal instance of this, the whole argument in his "Essays on Religion," from p. 142 to p. 145

which it is invariably and unconditionally consequent." Similarly in a later work. "When we say that an ordinary physical fact always takes place according to some invariable law, we mean that it is connected by uniform sequence or co-existence with some definite set of physical antecedents; that whenever that set is exactly reproduced, the same phenomenon will take place, unless counteracted by the similar laws of some other physical antecedent; and that whenever it does take place, it would always be found that its special set of antecedents (or one of its sets, if it has more than one) has pre-existed" ("Essays on Religion," p. 224). In other words, according to Mr. Mill, no phenomenon ever shows itself—be it physical or psychical—without a corresponding phenomenal antecedent, and the same phenomenal antecedent is invariably followed by the same phenomenal consequent. This intensely complex fact—the uniformity of nature—consists, he would add, of certain less complex groups of facts called "the laws of nature." It is a "law of nature" *e.g.* that if wheat seed be duly sown, and there be no adverse phenomena, wheat plant will in due time grow up: and so in a million of other cases, physical or psychical. He would hold that this existent uniformity of nature may imaginably be brought to a close in two different ways. On one hand, the existent laws of nature might be changed for different laws as *e.g.* it might become a law of nature that, if wheat seed is sown, the *barley* plant shall duly follow. On the other hand, the existent laws of nature might come to an end, without being succeeded by any others whatever; so that, in his own words, "a chaos should succeed, in the which there was no fixed succession of events, and the past gave no assurance of the future."

We need hardly say that we substantially accept this statement; but we do so, subject to two important excep-

tions. We regard it as generally true, but by no means as *universally* true, that visible and phenomenal nature proceeds uniformly. In the first place, we hold that this uniformity of nature is interrupted with indefinite frequency by miracles and other prodigies. In the second place, we maintain that one most important class of psychical phenomena, viz human volitions, are largely external to the common law of uniformity.

We are now able to understand what Mr. Mill means by "cause." "We may define the 'cause' of a phenomenon" he says, "to be the antecedent, or the concurrence of antecedents, on which it invariably and unconditionally follows" ("Logic," 1 392). And he implies in this statement what he has already stated in p. 376. "When I speak of the cause of a phenomenon, I do not mean a cause which is not itself a phenomenon. The causes with which I concern myself are not efficient but physical causes" It is his deliberate profession, that by the term "cause" he always intends to express a certain phenomenon, more or less complex—a phenomenon which, according to the existent laws of nature, is invariably and unconditionally followed by *another* phenomenon more or less complex, which he calls the *effect* of such cause.

As it is of some practical importance that our readers shall be sufficiently familiar with Mr. Mill's view of causation, we will enter on one or two further details, which are not strictly necessary to our subsequent argument. We will consider briefly, then, a criticism which has sometimes been made on his view, viz. that, according to that view, day is the "cause" of night, and night of day. For our own part, we think he has sufficiently disproved this allegation. These are his words:—

It is necessary to our using the word *cause*, that we should believe not only that the antecedent always has been followed by the consequent, but that, as long as the present constitution

of things endures, it always *will* be so. And this would not be true of day and night. We do not believe that night will be followed by day under all imaginable circumstances, but only that it will be so *provided* the sun rises above the horizon. If the sun ceased to rise, which, for aught we know, may be perfectly compatible with the general laws of matter, night would be, or might be, eternal. On the other hand, if the sun is above the horizon, his light not extinct, and no opaque body between us and him, we believe firmly that unless a change takes place in the properties of matter, this combination of antecedents will be followed by the consequent, day, that if the combination of antecedents would be indefinitely prolonged, it would be always day, and that if the same combination had always existed, it would always have been day, quite independently of night as a previous condition. Therefore is it that we do not call night the cause, nor even a condition, of day. The existence of the sun (or some such luminous body), and there being no opaque medium in a straight line between that body and the part of the earth where we are situated, are the sole conditions, and the union of these, without the addition of any superfluous circumstances, constitutes the cause ("Logic," i. 391.)

The considerations here set forth by Mr. Mill bear on another question, on which, as it seems to us, he has not quite done justice to his own theory. He says (i. 380) that there is no "scientific ground for the distinction between the *cause* of a phenomenon and its *conditions*." This certainly holds good (on his theory of causation) in regard to any such condition as intuitionists call a "condition *sine quâ non*;" but we doubt whether it holds good in regard to conditions in general. No instance is more commonly given as illustrating the distinction between a "condition" and "cause," than the distinction between ploughing and sowing. Every intuitionist says, as a matter of course, that there is a real relation of *causality*, indeed, between due contact of seed with earth on one hand, and the plant's growth on the other; but that the ploughing is a mere *condition*, and does not causally inflow

into the effect. But it seems to us (though we by no means speak confidently, and the matter is of no practical importance whatever), that on *Mr. Mill's own theory* also, the ploughing is not legitimately accounted part of the "cause." Let it be supposed that hitherto the joint presence of A, B, and C has been the invariable antecedent of M. It does not, nevertheless, therefore follow (on Mr. Mill's theory) that A is a partial cause of M, unless it be also true that, so long as the present laws of nature endure, the union of B and C will never be followed by M unless they are accompanied by A. Now, it is included in the existent laws of nature that whenever the seed is duly deposited in the earth, the plant, except for accidental impediments, will in course of time grow up, and conversely also, that the plant will never grow up *unless* seed has first been duly deposited in the earth. But there is no ground that we know of for accounting it inconsistent with the existent laws of nature, that some other method be discovered, entirely different from ploughing, whereby earth and seed shall be brought into due contact.

Our two last remarks have been made by us, as we said, with no other purpose than that of more familiarizing the inquirer's mind with Mr. Mill's interpretation of the word "cause." And if our readers think that our attempted vindication of him has been unsuccessful, that he is obliged in consistency to account night the cause of day, and to deny all distinction between cause and condition,—they are perfectly welcome to think so: they will in no way, by so thinking, be placed out of harmony with our own general argument. We will now, however, without further episode, pursue that argument. The sense, then, in which intuitionists use the word "cause" is so fundamentally different from Mr. Mill's, that it would be impossible to contend against phenomenists without inextricable confusion, unless we first close this inexhaustible inlet of mis-



apprehension. Indeed, we are confident, as we shall presently argue, that the phenomenistic tenet on causation could never have been persistently held by men even of average intelligence, had they not veiled from themselves the true nature of their tenet by their equivocal terminology. For this reason we entirely decline, in argument with Mr. Mill, to use the word "cause" in his sense; and we must at once, therefore, look about for some term which shall sufficiently express his idea. On reflection, we think it will be satisfactory if we use the word "prevenant" to denote what he calls "cause," "postvenant" to denote what he calls "effect," "prevenance" to denote what he calls "causation." We think it not only no inconvenience, but, on the contrary, a very great advantage, that these words, being invented by ourselves for the occasion, can have no other technical sense. It is becoming a more and more common complaint that so much confusion of thought finds entrance into philosophical discussion, through words of ordinary use being employed to express important philosophical ideas: it is becoming more and more commonly felt, that no word can endure the rough handling of everyday colloquialism without acquiring considerable ambiguity of sense. On our own side, we must explain to our Catholic readers that the "cause," with which our reasoning concerns itself throughout, is what Catholic philosophical works call "the efficient cause."\*

These verbal preliminaries having been laid down, we are now to maintain that "the principle of causation" is self-evidently cognizable, as a necessary ampliative truth. The "principle of causation," or (as we shall sometimes call it) "the causation doctrine," is expressed in the statement that "whatever has a commencement has a cause;"

\* Catholic philosophers, indeed, usually include "moral" cause under the head of "efficient." But this sense is here excluded. A moment's consideration will show that when these philosophers enounce "the principle of causation," they do not at all include "moral" causation.

or, which is equivalent, that "every new doctrine or new mode of existence has a cause."\* Our readers will of course ask for some explanation as to the sense in which we, on our side, use this word "cause." We at once admit that such explanation is most reasonably required at our hands; and this explanation, indeed, will occupy a prominent place in the course of our argument. But, before entering on our argument at all, we wish to avow frankly that we base our conclusion, not on grounds of experience, but of intuition, that we shall appeal to experience only as testifying the universality of a certain intuition. And if phenomenists promptly exclaim, as they are sure to do, that "intuition" means only "my private persuasion," and that my own private persuasion can be no evidence of objective truth,† our answer to this objection has been stated again and again. It is only through *intuition* that either phenomenists or any one else can

\* Some Catholics may possibly doubt whether we have laid a sufficiently broad foundation for the Theistic argument in our way of stating the principle of causation. Thus Dr Mivart, whose authority on such a question is very great, supplements the principle of causation as expressed in the text by another, which he accounts equally evident, viz that "everything must be either absolute or caused," that is, that every contingent thing is caused ("Lessons from Nature," p 356). He adds this supplement because of his holding with S. Thomas, that reason cannot by itself disprove with certitude the eternity of matter. It will be desirable, therefore, that we briefly place before our Catholic readers the position on this subject, which we are ourselves prepared in due course to sustain.

Now, Liberators, who himself also holds S. Thomas's doctrine, admits nevertheless that some scholastics and "almost all modern philosophers" are against him ("Cosmologia," n 30). Petavius (de Deo, l i m c 6, n 1) declares it to be the universal patristic doctrine, used constantly in controversy with the Arians, that the notion of an eternal creature is cognizable by reason as intrinsically repugnant. It may be worth while further to add that Liberators himself ("Logic," n 230) defines an "effect" as "that which advances from the state of possibility to the state of existence," or, in other words, which has a commencement.

With sincere deference, then, to those eminent Catholics who on this matter follow S. Thomas, we cannot do so ourselves. Nay, we regard the thesis that "all contingent things have a commencement" as more obtrusively (if we may so speak) axiomatic than the thesis that "all contingent things have a cause."

† Certain persons, says Mr. Mill, "addict themselves with intolerant

possess experience of *phenomena*. Those particular intuitions, which are called acts of *memory*, are literally the only bases they can allege for any one experience which they cite. In truth, each man's act of memory may be called his own "private persuasion" or "internal feeling," in a much more simple and literal sense than can those intuitions of causality to which we shall now appeal. For each man's memory of his past experience is strictly peculiar to himself; whereas the intuitions, which we shall here allege, are common, as we maintain, to all mankind.

Now, as to what is the genuine positive sense of that word "cause," which is the centre of our argument, this is a question which we are presently to consider, with as much accuracy and completeness as we can. But the first fact to which we would draw attention should be noted anteriorly to this consideration. It is most evident, on even a superficial examination of facts, that a certain idea of causation which is, at all events, fundamentally different from the idea of *prevenience*—and a belief in the widely-spread *existence* of causation as so apprehended—that this idea and belief, we say, prevail generally among mankind. Indeed, we are able to call Mr Mill himself into court, as a signal example of the thoroughly false intellectual position in which any one is placed who attempts to identify causation with *prevenience*. His professed theory is, of course, most intelligible. In no case of causation, he says ("On Hamilton," p. 377), "have we evidence of anything more than what experience informs us of; and it informs us of nothing except immediate, invariable, and unconditional sequence." And the context shows, even if it could be otherwise doubtful, that by "sequence" he here means

zeal to those forms of philosophy in which intuition usurps the place of evidence, and internal feeling is made the test of objective truth" ("Essays on Religion," p. 72).

sequence of *phenomena*. Yet, in his work on "Logic," the following remarks are to be found—remarks which, as coming from Mr Mill, may be characterized as not less than astounding. He is speaking about the question of miracles, and we italicize a word or two —

In order that any alleged fact should be contradictory to a law of causation, the allegation must be, not simply that the cause existed without being followed by the effect, but that this happened in the absence of any adequate counteracting cause. Now, in the case of the alleged miracle, the assertion is the exact opposite of this. It is that the effect was defeated, not in the absence but in consequence of a *counteracting cause*, namely, a direct interposition of *an act of the will* of some being *who has power over nature*. A miracle is no contradiction to the law of cause and effect: it is a new effect supposed to be produced by *the introduction of a new cause* (ii 167, 168).

In the eighth edition of his "Logic," when answering a criticism of ours, Mr Mill introduces a similar remark into an earlier page —

I admit *no other uniformity in the laws of nature* than the law of causation, and a miracle *is no exception to that law*. In every case of alleged miracle a new antecedent is affirmed to exist, a counteracting cause, *viz the volition of a supernatural being* (p. 110).

But his professed theory is, that "between the *phenomena* which exist at any instant and the phenomena which exist at the succeeding instant there is an invariable order of succession." Mr Mill cannot surely mean to call a volition of the Invisible God by the name of a *phenomenon* and we must account, then, for this extraordinary logical collapse by the impossibility, which Mr Mill himself experienced, of expelling from his mind that idea which so clamorously presents itself to all men—the idea of true causation.

And this collapse is the more significant, if we consider what absolute havoc it makes of those very philosophical

principles which he accounted more essential than any others. Mr. Mill did not admit the existence of any science except experimental; and no one felt more strongly than he that the uniformity of nature is a doctrine absolutely indispensable to the very existence of experimental science, whether physical or psychological. Take any one of the million truths firmly established by such science; *e.g.* the truth that "all diamonds are combustible." How is it possible for me to acquire reasonable proof of this truth? I know, by experience, that those diamonds are combustible on which I have made the experiment; and I know, by the testimony of others, that those diamonds are combustible on which *they* have made the experiment. But I have not the shadow of ground for extending my proposition to *all* diamonds, unless I have sufficient proof that nature proceeds uniformly.\* So keenly, indeed, did Mr. Mill feel the justice of this remark, that he elaborated with great care a proof of what he called "the law of universal causation," as being the one corner-stone of his whole philosophical edifice. Yet suddenly it appears that he held no doctrine *at all* of "universal" phenomenal "causation." Suddenly it appears that he held no doctrine on the uniformity of nature inconsistent with his supposing that there may be as many deities on Olympus as Homer himself believed in, and that each one of these deities is arbitrarily interfering with the course of nature every minute of every day. In every one such case, "the volition of a supernatural being" would count with him as "a new antecedent," as a "counteracting cause;" so that every arbitrary and irregular phenomenon so brought about would be, in his view, "a case of the law of universal causation," "and not a *deviation* from it." If we could trust what he says in the two passages we

\* It may most fairly be asked how belief in the *Catholic miracles* is consistent with belief in the certainty of physical science. We answer this question directly and expressly in our essay on "Science, Prayer, Freewill, and Miracles."

have quoted, he never intended to defend "the law of universal causation" in any such sense whatever as to imply that nature proceeds uniformly; or in any such sense whatever as would represent that law to be a sufficient foundation for experimental science. How, it may be asked, do we account for this amazing bewilderment of thought? We reply that, even in the case of Mr. Mill, his intuitional element is too strong for him. "*Naturam expellās furcā, tamen usque recurret*" The existence of a causality, entirely distinct from prevenience, is so clamorous a dictate of human intelligence that even Mr. Mill cannot be always shutting his ears to it.\*

And this lands us in a further comment. It is a favourite topic of the phenomenistic controversialist that intuitionists are self-condemned, by the very fact of their admitting the *existence* of an opposite party. "How can you say," he asks, "that the intuitions to which you appeal are universal, when the very next moment you say that they are *not* universal? when the very next moment you say that a large and dangerous school of philosophy declares itself unconscious of their existence?" We reply, in the first place, that Mr. Mill often confesses that those intellectual avouchments to which we appeal *are* universal; and only contends that they cannot in reason be accepted as evidences of objective truth. But, further—and it is to this we are here specially drawing attention—again and again, when he is not thinking of his theory, he *himself* accepts them as evidences of objective truth. Consider *e.g.* his dealing with the idea of "morally good" It is the very foundation of his moral system, that the term cannot reasonably be used, except as signifying "beneficial to mankind" And yet there is hardly any writer of the day who so abounds with appeals to "virtue," "moral eleva-

\* Mr. Mill speaks with a very far greater reflection on this matter, in his posthumously published "*Essays on Religion*," pp. 224-226.

tion," and the like, which are pure and simple nonsense if you try the experiment of substituting for those terms what he maintains to be their equivalent. Of course, we think this fact most honourable to his moral nature; but his moral nature is thus advantageously exhibited to the sacrifice of his philosophical intelligence. The passages to which we refer are as simply inconsistent with the theory professed by him on *morals*, as those which we have been just now citing are inconsistent with the theory professed by him on *causation*.

In this spontaneous and unconscious admission of a causation entirely distinct from prevenience, Mr. Mill does but represent the rest of mankind. Not only all mankind have an *idea* of causation as distinct from prevenience, but they have an irresistible and deep conviction that causation *exists* over and above mere prevenience. Had they not this conviction, how would they regard the stream of phenomena? No such thing could be supposed by them to be in *rerum naturâ*, as "influx" or "dependence." The visible world would be to them a mere phantasmagoria or external picture. They would recognize no closer nexus between the wheat seed and the wheat plant, or between the sun and the sensation of warmth, or between human volitions and human bodily movements,—than between the first letter of the alphabet and the second, or the boy who always stands first in class and the boy who stands next him, or the moment of time which we call "eleven o'clock" and the moment of time which we call "five minutes past eleven."\* But every person of ordinary intelligence, who is not thinking of a gratuitously assumed theory, would peremptorily

\* It might be said, with much plausibility, that in Mr. Mill's vocabulary "eleven o'clock" ought to be called a *cause* of "five minutes after eleven," for most certainly the later moment "invariably and unconditionally succeeds" the earlier. We suppose Mr. Mill would reply that a moment of time is not a *phenomenon*. But such reply would put in still stronger light the amazing inconsistency of his calling *God's agency* a "cause."

repudiate such a view of things, as repugnant to his deep and sure conviction.

We have argued, then, that mankind not only have an *idea* of causality, distinct from the idea of prevenience, but that they have a conviction that causality *exists* among phenomena, and not mere prevenience. Our second step will be to consider more precisely what *is* this idea of causality. We consider, on one hand, that the idea "cause" is a simple idea, not composed of any others; and on the other hand, that it is a purely intellectual idea, not a copy of anything experienced by the senses. In the course of our essays we have already mentioned two such simple and purely intellectual ideas, viz. "necessary" and "moral good," and to these we here add that of "cause." Now, of course there is a certain difficulty in explaining an idea of this kind. Were it a copy of some sensation, we could content ourselves with referring to such sensation. Were it composed of simpler ideas, we could explain it by reciting those simpler ideas. But neither of these methods being (by hypothesis) available, we can only suggest the occasions on which an inquirer may unmistakably recognize what is beyond doubt a very prominent part of his mental furniture. Now, the instance most commonly given by philosophers of a "cause," seems to us most happily chosen for our purpose, as being one in which that idea is exhibited with especial distinctness and prominence: we refer to the influx of a man's mental volitions into his bodily acts. I am urgently in need of some article, contained in a closet of which I cannot find the key, and accordingly I break open the closet with my fist. Certainly my idea of the relation which exists between my volition and my blow is something indefinitely beyond that of mere universal and unconditional sequence. If on the one hand that idea is incapable of being analyzed, on the other hand it is to the full as incapable of being explained away or



misapprehended. The idea is as characteristic and as clamorously distinguished from every other as is that of "sweet," or "melodious," or "white." Phenomenists may deny that it corresponds with any objective reality; but they cannot deny that it is in fact conceived by the human mind, without exposing themselves to the intellectual contempt of every one who possesses the most ordinary intelligence and introspective faculty. The words "force," "power," "influx," "agency," or, on the other hand, "dependence," may more or less suggest the idea "cause," their respective significations being (as we hold) more or less founded on that idea. But at last the most efficacious way for each man to apprehend it, is to imagine some such instance as we have named.

It will, perhaps, be serviceable if we give a second illustration. I am bent on acquiring a knowledge of Euclid, and I apply my mind therefore vigorously to mastering the demonstration given by him of some theorem. Consider the relation which exists between my volition on one hand, and my intellectual process on the other. Here is an instance, differing widely in circumstances and detail from that just now given. and yet this identical notion of "cause" is no less unmistakably present to my mind when I consider this case, than it was when I considered the former.

And now we come, lastly, to the third and crowning step of our argument. The "principle of causation," or the "causation doctrine," is, that "whatever has a commencement has a cause." We maintain that this proposition is cognized by the human mind as self-evidently certain and necessary.

This psychological allegation can of course only be established by means of psychological trial. But on whom shall we make the trial? We will not exactly say "*fiat experimentum in animâ vili*;" but at all events it will not be fair to make the experiment on a *philosopher*, be he

intuitionist or phenomenist. If a landlord and farmer disagree, they will not choose for arbitrator some landlord or some farmer, but perhaps some lawyer. In like manner disputing psychologists will not be satisfied with the award of one who has already espoused his theory. And we indeed on our side, as has been seen, have especial reason for distrusting the verdict of phenomenists, because again and again, when expressly confronting some philosophical theory, they persuade themselves to disbelieve their own possession of this or that conviction; whereas, when they allow themselves free play, that very conviction proves its existence in their mind by the most undeniable energy. We will not, then, appeal to the arbitration of philosophers. But, as is clear, neither can we satisfactorily appeal to the verdict of rough and uneducated minds, which may be wholly incapable of introspection. It is manifest indeed, we maintain, to impartial observers, that a conviction of the causation doctrine energizes in them quite as powerfully and constantly as in their more cultivated neighbours, but we cannot expect them to *depose* to its existence. The fair arbitrator, then, will be some person, on the one hand, of sufficiently cultivated faculties, but, on the other hand, who has not given his attention to philosophical inquiries. To obtain from such a man his genuine avouchment, you may deal with him in some such way as the following:—

You draw his attention to the fact that here is some wheat on the ground ripe for the sickle. You place intelligibly before his mind the doctrine, that what caused the wheat to grow has been partly certain properties or forces of the seed, and partly certain properties or forces of the earth with which that seed has been brought into contact. He entirely assents. "I should never have dreamed," he says, "of any other notion." You point out to him, however, the possibility that God or some super-

natural being has miraculously there placed the wheat, without any seed having been previously sown. "Well," he replies, "it stands to reason that if there be a God, He *can* do this; but I need very strong proof indeed before I accept the supposition of a miracle." Lastly, you suggest to him, that perhaps neither was seed sown nor did any preternatural being interfere, but that the wheat came there without any agency at all. As soon as he understands what you mean—which probably he does not find very easy—he is angry at his common sense being insulted by so self-evidently absurd a supposition. You rejoin, that he believes *God* to exist without any cause; and you ask him why therefore he cannot believe that *wheat* may exist without any cause. The obvious unfairness, as he will account it, of such a suggestion increases his wrath. In his own unscientific language, he gives you to understand that God never *began* to exist, nay, that Existence is involved in his very Essence. "The monstrous allegation," he will add, "against which I am exclaiming, consists in your statement that a thing can *begin* to exist—can come from nothingness into being—except through the agency of some cause or other." If you then proceed to cross-question him on this word "cause"—if you suggest that he means by it no more than "prevenient"—his wrath is still greater than before, so completely have you denaturalized his meaning. And he will account it just as self-evidently absurd to say that anything can commence without a cause, as it would be to say that a trilateral figure can be quadrangular, or that two straight lines proceeding in the same mutual direction can finally intersect.

We have imagined this little scene for the purpose of exhibiting those phenomena of human nature which, as we maintain, make it so absolutely certain that men instinctively regard the principle of causation as a self-evidently necessary truth. We need not spend many words in

repeating what we have so often urged before; viz. that if this psychological fact be admitted, the corresponding ontological truth rests on an absolutely impregnable basis. If the principle of causation be *avouched by the human mind* as a necessary truth, it is a necessary truth. I should be thought not less than insane, if I doubted the veraciousness of my memory as to what I experienced two minutes ago; but I have in some sense even stronger reason for accepting what—not my own private intuition alone, but—the intuition of all mankind avouches as certain.

We may take this opportunity, however, for considering a particular instance of objection often adduced by phenomenists—an objection to which we have virtually replied indeed again and again, but which we have not on earlier occasions expressly encountered. “Is there any one of your so-called intuitions,” asks the phenomenist, “which the human mind more spontaneously and irresistibly avouches, than for many centuries it avouched as self-evident that the sun moves round the earth? Yet you admit that this latter avouchment was a pure delusion; and why therefore may not its avouchment of the causation doctrine—granting for argument’s sake that that avouchment exists—be equally delusive?”

We begin our reply by a remark, which is no part indeed of our argument, but which is required for the purpose of clearness. Take any time and place, in which men never dreamed of Copernicanism. In that time and place, their acceptance of geocentricism has nevertheless not been an *immediate* judgment; it has been one of those numerous instances in which an inference is made so rapidly, inevitably, and imperceptibly, as to be easily *mistaken* for an immediate judgment. The syllogism, of which the geocentric judgment is the conclusion, may be thus stated: “That which is incompatible with undoubted phenomena is false; but any theory other than geocentri-

cism is thus incompatible, and is therefore false." It may be worth while also to add, that the major premiss of this syllogism is undeniable. On the other hand, my assent to the causation doctrine is not the mere conclusion of a syllogism, but is an immediate judgment. For the only syllogism which could possibly issue in that doctrine as in its conclusion, would be reducible to the following form:— "Every X must have a cause, but whatever has a commencement is an X, ergo, etc.": where X must represent some class larger than that of "things which have a commencement." But most certainly no syllogism of this type passes through my mind as my motive of assent to the principle of causation.\*

We proceed, then, to answer the objection before us. And, reverting to the geocentric syllogism as just now drawn out, we answer the objection by simply denying that men ever gave an absolute assent either to the minor premiss or to the conclusion of that syllogism. We shall be better able to explain what we here mean if we cite, with a few verbal changes, a course of remark contained in a former essay.

"Phenomenists are very fond of adducing this or that instance, in which they allege that our faculties declare as certain what is not really so. I see a straight stick in the water, and my faculties (they urge) pronounce as certain that the stick is crooked, or if a cherry is placed on my crossed fingers, my faculties pronounce as certain that my hand is touched by *two* substances. All these superficial difficulties are readily solved by resorting to a philosophical consideration, which is familiar to Catholics, though (strangely enough) we do not remember to have seen it in non-Catholic works. We refer to the distinction between what may be called 'undoubting' and what may be called 'absolute' assent.

\* The only possible "class X" would be "contingent things." But even Dr Mivart does not say—nor could any one say on reflection—that the proposition "all contingent things are caused" is more immediately evident to the human mind than the proposition "all commencing things are caused."

“By ‘absolute’ assent we understand an assent so firm as to be *incompatible* with the co-existence of doubt, but by ‘undoubting’ assent we mean no more than that with which *in fact* doubt does not co-exist. Now, the mere undoubtingness of an assent does not at all imply any particular *firmness*, but arises from mere accident. For instance a friend, coming down to me in the country, tells me that he has caught a sight of the telegrams as he passed through London, and that the Versailles government has possession of Paris.\* I had long expected this, and I assent to the fact without any admixture of doubt. In an hour or two, however, the morning paper comes in, and I find that my friend’s cursory glance has misled him, for that the army has only arrived *close up to* Paris. The extreme facility with which I dismiss my former ‘undoubting’ assent, shows how very far it was from being ‘absolute’. Its true analysis, in fact, was no more than this: ‘there is an *a priori* presumption that Paris is taken.’ But as no particular motive for doubt happened to cross my mind, I was not led to reflect on the true character of the assent which I yielded.

“Now to apply this. Evidently it cannot be said that my cognitive faculties declare any proposition to be certainly true, unless they yield to that proposition ‘absolute’ assent. But a moment’s consideration will show that my assent to the crookedness of the stick or the duplicity of the cherry may accidentally indeed have been undoubting, but was extremely far from being absolute. Its true analysis was, ‘there is an *a priori* presumption that the stick is crooked, or that there are two objects touched by my fingers.’ The matter may be brought to a crucial experiment by some such supposition as the following —

“I am myself but youthful, whether in age or power of thought, but I have a venerable friend and mentor, in whose moral and intellectual endowments I repose perfect confidence. I fancy myself to see a crooked stick, or to feel two touching objects, but he explains to me the physical laws which explain my delusion, and I surrender it with the most perfect facility. He proceeds, however—let us suppose, for the purpose of probing the depth of my convictions—to tell me that I have no reason whatever for knowing that I ever experienced a certain sensation, which my memory most distinctly declares me to have experienced a very short time ago, or again, that as to the particular *trilateral* figure which I have in my thoughts, I have

\* This was of course written in 1871

no reason whatever for knowing it to be triangular, and that he believes it to have *five* angles. Well, first of all I take for granted that I have not rightly understood him. When I find that I *have* rightly understood him, either I suspect him (as the truth indeed is) to be simulating, or else I pluck up courage and rebel against his teaching, or else (if I am too great an intellectual coward for this) I am reduced to a state of hopeless perplexity and bewilderment, and on the high-road to idiocy. There is one thing, at all events, which I cannot do. I cannot compel myself to doubt that which my existing faculties testify as certain. So great is the distinction between merely 'undoubting' and 'absolute' assent, between my faculties testifying that there is an *a priori* presumption for some proposition, and their testifying that it is *certainly* true."

The contrast, contained in this latter paragraph, can be applied with its full force to our present theme. I have never heard of Copernicanism, and hold with "undoubting" assent the geocentric theory. But a venerable friend and mentor explains to me, that heliocentrism is in no respect incompatible with phenomena, and indeed that, on the heliocentric supposition, the familiar phenomena of daily life would be precisely the same as on the geocentric. So soon as I understand this, I have not so much as the faintest difficulty in surrendering my geocentrism. My belief in that theory may have accidentally been "undoubting," but it was extremely removed from being "absolute." Now, the very contrary of this holds as to the principle of causation. If I were called on to believe that something came into existence without a cause, and if accordingly I made an effort to do so, I should be "reduced to a state of hopeless perplexity and bewilderment, and on the high-road to idiocy." I could not possibly compel myself to believe it, precisely because my existent faculties declare it to be self-evidently false.

So much on this particular objection. As regards our general argument, it may be worth while briefly to note one thing further, which is evident as soon as stated. The idea

of causation in no way whatever depends—whereas the idea of prevenience entirely depends—on the uniformity of nature. To take our old instance, let us suppose that the wheat plant had no prevenient whatever; that the very same phenomena, which in one time or place precede its appearance, when found in combination at another time and place usher in some *completely different* phenomenon from that of the wheat plant. Such a circumstance would not give me the slightest difficulty in understanding what is meant by a cause, nor would it in the slightest degree affect my certain knowledge that the wheat plant *has* a cause. If secondary causes lost all power of acting—as God, in the Catholic belief, is indubitably free to deprive them of that power—such cessation of their power would not ever so remotely tend to weaken that argument for God's Existence, which is derived from the principle of causation.

On looking through Mr. Mill's chapter on causation in his reply to Hamilton (pp. 359–379), we find but one small portion of it which, as far as we can see, requires any further notice than is contained in the preceding pages. Both Sir W. Hamilton and Mr. Mill himself (p. 371) repudiate the theory of “Wolfe and the Leibnitzians,” that to deny the principle of causation would be to violate the principle of *contradiction*. We do not know whether we have made it sufficiently clear that we are ourselves at one both with Hamilton and his critic, in heartily repudiating that theory; though we have been told by a learned friend who seems to know, that “Wolfe and the Leibnitzians” are as far from holding it as we are. Perhaps it will conduce to more precise apprehension of what we have throughout intended, if we notice expressly this possible philosophical position.

We regard, then, that proposition which expresses the causality doctrine, not as an “explicative,” but as an



"ampliative" proposition. In fact, as we have already said, if it were only "explicative," it could not possibly have any philosophical importance; whereas, in truth, there is hardly a more important principle throughout the whole range of philosophy. "Whatever has a commencement has a cause." We are as far as Mr. Mill himself from alleging, that by any possible *analysis* of the idea "having a commencement" we can find therein included the idea "having a cause." What we do allege as regards the above-named proposition is, that, in F. Kleutgen's words, "by merely considering the idea of the subject and the predicate, I come to see that there exists between them that relation which the proposition expresses."\* I consider, on one hand, the idea of "having a commencement." I consider, on the other hand, the totally distinct idea of "having a cause." And by considering the two ideas, I come to see that there exists between them that relation which is expressed in the principle of causation. My power of cognizing the principle of causation—just as my power of cognizing other self-evident truths—arises from that most precious property of the human mind whereby it is enabled to cognize with certainty as self-evident a large number of ampliative truths. It is precisely in virtue of possessing this property that the human mind is capable of knowledge properly so called.

But now to deny the truth of an ampliative proposition, however obtrusively self-evident such proposition may be, is not in itself to violate the principle of contradiction. If I say *e.g.* that some trilateral figure is quadrangular, I say what is self-evidently absurd, and I say what leads by

\* F. Kleutgen says that it is such a proposition as this which Catholic philosophers intend to denote by the term "analytical." On the other hand, non-Catholic philosophers, whether intuitionist or phenomenist, use the word "analytical" as synonymous with what we call "explicative." We have before said that for this reason we think it better to avoid the term "analytical" altogether.

*necessary consequence* to a contradiction, but not what is itself self-contradictory.

Here we bring to a close our treatment of causation. We need hardly say, that there are many questions concerning it on which we have not touched. In particular, we may mention Mr. Martineau's theory—a theory hardly differing from what is called "occasionalism"—that no substance can be a cause, even a secondary one, unless it possess intelligence. We feel great respect and gratitude to Mr. Martineau, for his very valuable labours in the cause of true philosophy; but on this particular tenet we are obliged to dissent from him with much confidence. At the same time, we shall not enter into controversy on the subject, because our purpose only requires us to deal with those truths which are necessary for the argumentative establishment of Theism.

In the next essay of our series we hope to conclude what we have to say on freewill. Since we last wrote on that theme, Dr. Bain has brought out the third edition of his volume on "*The Emotions and the Will*," in which he has inserted (pp. 498–500) a few pages of reply to our former essay. Our first business, then, will be to recapitulate the arguments which we adduced against determinism, with special reference to Dr. Bain's objections. Secondly, we hope, by help of the causation doctrine, to establish as certain that every human adult is to himself a self-determining cause of volition. Lastly, we have to answer two particular objections—one of them extremely momentous—which we named in our essay on Mr. Mill's "*Denial of Freewill*."

## IX.

### FREEWILL.

#### REPLY TO A REPLY OF DR. BAIN'S.

THE plan according to which we have hitherto laid out our essays, and which we hope to continue, was set forth, we trust, with sufficient clearness in our essay on Causation. Our argument led us in due course to the very fundamental and critical question of Freewill. Our reasoning on that subject, we consider, was such as will hold its own against all gainsayers; but the two opponents whom we encountered as specially representing the hostile camp, were Mr. Stuart Mill and Dr. Bain. Mr. Mill's death had at that time already occurred; but Dr. Bain, in the third edition of his great work on "The Emotions and Will," referred to our essay on Mr. Mill's denial of freewill, and professed to refute it. His remarks—expressed, we are bound to say, with most abundant courtesy—seem to us so very insufficiently considered that, had they come from an ordinary writer, we should not have thought it worth while to notice them. But Dr. Bain is justly recognized as one of the two living thinkers—Mr. Herbert Spencer being the other—who stand at the head of the English psychological (as distinct from physiological) movement towards antitheism. Then, his volume itself, on the "Emotions and the Will," is one, we think, of very conspicuous ability; one which shows in various places

great power of psychological analysis ; and one which throws much light on some hitherto obscure corners of the human mind. Moreover, he was the one living person with whom we were in direct and immediate conflict. We have really, therefore, a right to deal with him as with a representative man, and to take credit on our own side for whatever weakness may be found in his reasoning. At last he has, of course, full liberty to "amend his plea ;" and if he is disposed hereafter to make a greater approach towards putting forth his full strength on the point at issue, we promise him we shall encounter him with greater readiness and gratification than we do at present.

If the reader wishes thoroughly to apprehend the reasoning we put forth in our former essays on this subject, we fear we cannot dispense him from the necessity of reading our two articles. Even supposing him, however, to have done so, a brief summary of our essential and fundamental argument will fix its salient points more definitely in his mind. Such a summary also may be useful, as exhibiting the general lie of the controversy even to those who may not care to go thoroughly into the matter. But, most of all, such a summary is indispensable if Dr. Bain's various replies are to be placed in a clear light.

We did not profess to treat the *whole* doctrine of Free-will. We considered it exclusively on its psychological side, reserving all metaphysical questions for later consideration. Mr. Mill and Dr. Bain maintain, "as a truth of *experience*," "that volitions follow determinate moral antecedents with the same uniformity and the same certainty as physical effects follow their physical causes." This, in fact, is the doctrine called by its upholders the "Deterministic." We joined issue on their own ground of experience, and alleged that experience testifies the precise contradictory of their thesis. 'As Dr. Bain calls his doctrine "Determinism," we called our contradictory one by the

name of "Indeterminism." The full doctrine of Freewill includes, indeed, the doctrine of Indeterminism; but it includes also a certain doctrine on the causation of human acts. This latter is a metaphysical question, and must be argued—as, indeed, we argue it in the second part of our present essay—on metaphysical grounds. Here we have no concern with it, except to mention that it is external to the controversy of our previous essays. We began by drawing out with much care a full statement of Dr. Bain's theory, as we apprehend it. Dr. Bain implies that he is satisfied with the accuracy of our analysis; for he says (p. 498) that "the arguments for and against Freewill are clearly summarized" in our essay. We further pointed out, that there are two different cases which need to be separately considered. There are cases in which for a while the will's spontaneous impulse exhibits much vacillation and, as one may say, vibration. But we added that "in the enormous majority of instances there is no vacillation or vibration at all in this spontaneous impulse; that on the contrary, in these instances, there is one definite and decisive resultant" of the various attractions which at any given moment act on the mind. We think that our own doctrine of Indeterminism is established by experience with no less conclusiveness in the former than in the latter class of cases. Still, it is the latter class of cases which place those mental facts on which we rely in more intense and irresistible light; and to this class of cases, therefore, we mainly appealed.

In the great majority of those moments, therefore, which together make up my waking life, my will is so promptly determined by the combined effect of the various attractions which solicit it, that its preponderating spontaneous impulse is definite and decisive. So far Dr. Bain and ourselves are in entire mutual agreement. Supposing, then, Dr. Bain could show that men never *resist* this preponderating

spontaneous impulse, we should not have a word further to say in our defence. Our contention against him turns precisely, critically, vitally, on one all-important and most definite kind of phenomena. "What we allege to be a fact of indubitable experience"—these were our words—"is this. At some given moment my will's *gravitation*, as it may be called, or preponderating spontaneous impulse, is in some given direction; insomuch that if I held myself *passively*, if I let my will alone, my will would with absolute certainty move accordingly: but *in fact* I exert myself, with more or less vigour, to *resist* such impulse, and then the action of my will is in a different, often an entirely opposite, direction. In other words, we would draw our reader's attention to the frequently occurring simultaneous existence of two very distinct phenomena. On the one hand, my will's *gravitation* or preponderating spontaneous impulse is strongly in one direction, while, on the other hand, at the same moment its actual *movement* is quite divergent from this. Now, that which *motives*"—to use Dr. Bain's terminology\*—"affect, is most evidently the will's spontaneous inclination, impulse, gravitation. The Determinist, then, by saying that the will's movement is infallibly determined by 'motives,' is obliged to say that the will never moves in opposition to its preponderating spontaneous impulse. And, *in fact*, he does say this. All Determinists assume, as a matter of course, that the will never puts forth effort for the purpose of resisting its preponderating spontaneous impulse. We, on the

\* We used the word "motive" in a different sense from Dr. Bain. What Dr. Bain calls a "motive," we called an "attraction." According to our use of terms, to ask what is my "motive" for some action, is to ask what is that end which I have resolved to pursue, and for the sake of which I resolve on the performance of that action. But if a *Determinist* asks me what is my "motive" for some action, he means to ask me what is the attraction which allures (and infallibly determines) me to do what I do. By "motive" he means an "attraction," but by "motive" we mean, not a certain attraction, or a certain solicitation, but a certain governing resolve.

contrary, allege that there is no mental fact more undeniable than the frequent putting forth of such effort." "And on this critical point," we added, "issue is now to be joined." \*

We proceeded to give instances in which, we think, no fair inquirer can doubt that men do put forth that anti-impulsive effort, as we called it, on which we lay so much stress, and, be it observed, if so much as any of these instances be admitted as genuine, the controversy is conclusively decided in our favour. It is quite clear to our mind, we say, that no intelligent person, who really gives his attention to the matter, can fairly examine these instances without admitting their conclusiveness. It is not all intelligent persons, however, of the phenomenistic school who will really give their attention to what their opponents say. And a most kind criticism of our essay, which appeared in the *Spectator*, impressed us with the opinion that we had failed in conveying to adverse readers, with due detail and illustration, the fundamental distinction on which our whole argument turned, the distinction between "anti-impulsive effort" on one side, and the will's "preponderating spontaneous impulse" on the other. To the supplying of this defect, therefore, we devoted a supplementary essay. If our readers wish thoroughly to apprehend the strength of our case, we must beg them to peruse that essay. Here we can but exhibit a few specimens of the instances which we suggested. And we should premise that, in order to obtain greater freedom of expression, in this second essay we somewhat enlarged our terminology. In what here follows—for the sake of still further, we hope, elucidating our argument—we have, in some unimportant respects, somewhat modified the said terminology; but no

\* In quoting our former essays, we occasionally make some entirely unimportant change of expression, in order to obtain, we hope, somewhat greater clearness.

one can even cursorily peruse our second essay on the subject, without understanding us to mean exactly what we shall now proceed to express. The chief term which we first introduced in that essay, was the term "desire." If my will's preponderating spontaneous impulse be directed to the attainment of some given result, I may be said to have a "preponderating desire," or simply "*the* desire," of that result. Or, again, the said preponderating spontaneous impulse may be called my "strongest" present impulse, or my "strongest" present desire. Very frequently, of course, there exists what may be called a "desire," but one which is not the "strongest," the "preponderating," present desire. For example: A is called very early on the 1st of September, and feels a real "desire" to sleep off again; nevertheless, his wish to be early among the partridges is a stronger, more influential, more keenly-felt, more stimulating desire. His "strongest present desire," therefore, his "strongest present impulse," his "preponderating spontaneous impulse," is to get up at once; which he accordingly does, as a matter of course. His *weaker* desire is to stay in bed, his *strongest* present desire to get up.

This terminology being understood, our illustrations were directed to show that over and over again *men resist their strongest present desire*. Let us revert to a preceding illustration. When A is called early on the 1st of September, his strongest present desire is to get up, and he gets up as a matter of course. But B, who is no sportsman, has also ordered himself to be called early the same morning, for a very different reason. He will be busy in the middle of the day, and he has resolved to rise betimes, that he may visit a sick dependent. When he is called, by far his strongest present desire is to sleep off again: but he exerts himself; he puts forth manly self-restraint, and forces himself to rise, though it be but laboriously and against the grain. A starts from bed by a spontaneous and



in deliberate impulse; but B resolves weakly and fails, resolves more strongly and fails again, until he at last succeeds by a still stronger and crowning resolve in launching himself on the sea of active life. "Surely," we added, "no mental states are more unmistakably contrasted than" the mental states of A and B respectively; though both are called early and both get up. A obeys his strongest present desire, while B resists it.\*

Parallel instances, we just now pointed out, are extremely frequent; and to this point we shall presently return. At the same time, we said in the first essay, "very far the most signal," the most impressive, the most arresting "instances of the doctrine we are defending, will be found in the devout Theist's resistance to temptation." We gave an illustration in our second paper. "A military officer—possessing real piety and steadfastly purposing to grow therein—receives at the hand of a brother officer some stinging and, as the world would say, 'intolerable' insult. His nature flames forth; his preponderating spontaneous impulse—his strongest present desire—is to inflict some retaliation, which at least shall deliver him from the 'reproach' of cowardice. Nevertheless, it is his firm resolve, by God's grace, to comport himself Christianly. His *resolve* contends vigorously against his strongest present *desire*, until the latter is brought into harmony with his principles." What a sustained series of intense anti-impulsive efforts is here exhibited! What could be wilder

\* We do not forget that a third hypothesis is possible. In another man, C, there may be that "vacillation" and "vibration" of the will's preponderating spontaneous impulse, which we have already mentioned. He is, we may suppose, a much less keen sportsman than A. His desire of lying in bed is at one moment slightly the stronger, and his desire of getting up is slightly the stronger next moment. Such vacillation, indeed, may continue for no very inconsiderable time. But what we ascribe to B is, that when he is called, his indefinitely strongest present desire is his desire of sleeping off again, and that he combats that desire, from a motive of benevolence, by vigorous anti-impulsive effort. No one surely will doubt that such a case is frequent enough.

than to say that, during this protracted period, he is acting in accordance with his strongest present desire, and with his will's preponderating spontaneous impulse ?

Let it be distinctly observed that we rest our case, not on the mere fact of an agent putting forth *effort* of the will, however intense ; but *anti-impulsive* effort. Here, again, we drew our illustration from some gallant soldier. Such a man " will very often put forth intense effort ; brave appalling perils ; confront the risk of an agonizing death. But to what end is this effort directed ? He puts it forth in order that he may act in full accordance with his preponderating spontaneous impulse ; in order that he may achieve what is his strongest present desire ; in order that he may defend his country, overcome his country's foe, obtain fame and distinction, gratify his military ardour, etc " Such efforts as these—efforts directed to the gratification of a man's strongest present desire—we called " congenial " efforts ; and undoubtedly the fact of such efforts being frequently put forth affords no argument whatever against Determinism. These efforts may be not less intense—they may, if you will, be indefinitely more intense than those which we commemorated in the preceding case. The two classes of effort mutually differ, not in degree but in kind. As regards our present argument, their difference is fundamental— that difference being, that " congenial " efforts are in *accordance* with the agent's strongest present desire, whereas " anti-impulsive " efforts are in *opposition* to it. And we may be permitted, perhaps, to point the contrast more emphatically, by introducing what may in some sense be called a theological consideration ; though in truth the fact to which we refer is an observed fact of experience, like any other. What soldier, then, could be found who would bear insult, contumely, and contempt with perfect patience, unless he were supported by earnest and unfaltering *prayer* ? But certainly with a very large

number there is no need of earnest and unfaltering prayer, in order to heroic action in the field. There have been not so very few warriors of truly amazing intrepidity, who have not exactly been men of prayer. So essentially different in kind are the two classes of effort.

There is a very familiar use of language which will throw still further light on the point before us. What we have called "anti-impulsive" effort, is continually spoken of in unscientific language as "self-control," or "self-restraint." Take the pious soldier who receives a stinging insult and bears it patiently: what is most remarkable in his conduct is his "self-restraint." But no one would commemorate the "self-restraint" of one who should be so carried away, breathlessly as it were, by military ardour, by desire of victory, by zeal for his country's cause, by a certain savage aggressiveness, which is partly natural and partly due to past habit—who should be so carried away, we repeat, by these and similar impulses, that, under their influence, he faces appalling danger without so much as a moment's deliberation or reflection.

In our supplementary essay, we thus summed up our argument. "The whole Deterministic controversy," we said, "turns on this one question. Do I, or do I not, at various times exercise self-restraint? Do I, or do I not, at various times act in resistance to my strongest present desire?" For consider. "What can 'motives,' in Dr. Bain's sense of that term, "or 'circumstances,' or 'temperament,' or 'habit,' or 'custom,' imaginably do for me at this moment, except to effect that my *desire* shall be this rather than that? How can they imaginably influence my action in those cases, where my action is *contrary* to my strongest present desire? If, then, there *are* such cases—if it be true that I often, or indeed ever, act in *opposition* to what at this moment is my strongest desire—then it demonstratively follows that my will at such times acts for itself;

independently of 'pleasure,' or 'pain,' or 'circumstances,' or 'motives,' or 'habits,' or anything else."

The question is simply and precisely this: "Do men ever resist their strongest present desire? Is there such a thing among men as 'self-restraint'?" "Let any one rightly understand," we concluded, "what it is which Mr. Mill and Dr. Bain affirm; and let him then proceed to look at the most obvious and every-day facts of life;—he will be able to discern with the clearest insight that their pretentious theory is a mere sham and delusion." Never was a more egregious imposture palmed on the world under the name of science and philosophy.

There is another matter, subordinate of course in importance to the vital issue we have been considering, but yet in its consequences of very considerable moment. We have said incidentally that the cases are very frequent, even with the most ordinary men, in which they put forth, however languidly and feebly, some little amount of self-restraint and self-control. There is honour among thieves. Even a member of the criminal classes brings himself again and again to resist his strongest present desire, in order to a deliberate provision for his own safety. So much is surely plain on the surface of facts. And the very same circumstance—the great frequency of anti-impulsive effort—is moreover made most manifest, by that conviction of their own moral liberty, which so intimately possesses the minds of all men in the whole world, except only that infinitesimal portion of mankind, the Deterministic philosophers. We appealed to this in our first essay. "Considering," we said, "how very few can look upon their habitual conduct with satisfaction if they choose to measure it even by their own standard of right, emphatic stress may justly be laid on the universal conviction, that there is such a thing as sin and guilt. There could be no sin or guilt, if every one's conduct were inevitably determined by

circumstances; and what a balm, therefore, to wounded consciences is offered by the Deterministic theory! Yet so strong and ineradicable in the mass of men is their conviction of possessing a real power against temptation, that they never attempt to purchase peace of mind by *disclaiming* that power." But how could it possibly happen that this conviction is so profoundly rooted in their mind—that it bears so strong a *prima facie* appearance of being an innate and indestructible instinct—were there not in each man's life a very frequent experience, on which that conviction is based?

The remainder of our first essay was mainly occupied in considering the various objections to our thesis which Determinists have adduced. There will, of course, be no reason for here reconsidering those objections, except so far as Dr. Bain has reproduced them. Without further preamble, therefore, we proceed to his reply.

The absolutely bewildering circumstance in that reply is that Dr. Bain does not once throughout refer to that one central and fundamental argument, on which we avowedly based our whole case. No doubt, he is unaware of our supplementary essay; but what can have been more express and emphatic than our statement in the original one? As soon as ever we had concluded our exposition of the Deterministic reasoning, we added, that "the whole argument, in our view, should be made to turn on one most simple and intelligible issue." And we then proceeded to set forth that issue in the plainest possible terms. Dr. Bain complains (p. 498) that "we throw on him the burden of" disproving Indeterminism; whereas we assumed the whole burden of proof ourselves, assailing Determinism unequivocally and emphatically. Dr. Bain has resolutely ignored our argument, and then complains of our not having *adduced* one. We cannot at all conjecture the cause of this singular omission.

Dr. Bain begins what he does say by a courteous remark that in our essay "some new aspects" of the Freewill question "have been opened up." We cannot, however, accept this compliment in anything like its full extent, because so much of our argument was built on Mr. Lloyd's pamphlet, which Dr. Bain has evidently never seen.\*

Dr. Bain's first adverse criticism is this :—

The writer too much identifies Determinism with the utilitarian theory of morals, or, indeed, with pure selfishness, for he regards Freewill as the only known counterpoise to selfish actions. Now, it is true that in illustrating the operation of motives, the opponents of Freewill describe these usually as "pleasures" or "pains;" being a convenient summary and representation of all possible motives. But they do not, therefore, maintain that all conduct is necessarily self-seeking. Many anti-libertarians assert in the strongest manner the existence of purely disinterested impulses. But the quoting of these disinterested motives—for example, pity and heroic self-devotion—would not alter one whit the state of the argument. As motives, these have a power to urge the will, and, when present alone, they determine it, in the case of a conflict, one side will succeed, which is thereby shown to be the stronger, and would prove so again should the situation be repeated (p. 498).

We reply, in the first place, that, had we said what Dr. Bain supposes, we should have been entirely justified, by his and Mr. Mill's language, in ascribing to *them* the doctrine which he here disavows. All Determinists, we need not say, hold as their first principle that the will is infallibly determined by what they call the "strongest motive," and it will be seen in the above paragraph how simply Dr. Bain takes this proposition for granted. Now, let the two following statements be observed which we extracted from Mr. Mill and Dr. Bain respectively in our first paper. Mr. Mill says (the *italics* are ours):—

\* "The Freedom of the Will stated afresh." By E. M. Lloyd. Longmans, 1868

Those who say that the will follows the strongest motive do not mean the motive which is strongest in relation to the will, or, in other words, that the will follows what it does follow. They mean the motive which is strongest *in relation to pain and pleasure*. since a motive, being a desire or aversion, is *proportional to the pleasantness* as conceived by us of the thing desired, or the *painfulness* of the thing shunned.

Still more pointedly Dr. Bain :—

It is only an identical proposition to affirm that the greatest of two pleasures, or what appears such, sways the resulting action, for it is the resulting action alone that determines which is the greater.

We quoted, of course, from Dr. Bain's second edition, which was then the most recent. Mr. H. W. Lucas mentions in one of his papers—we have not cared to verify the statement—that in Dr. Bain's third edition this sentence is not to be found. It is curious that, in this third edition, he should complain of us for misunderstanding him; while, at the same time, without making any avowal of the fact, he withdraws the very sentence which we had quoted as authenticating our view of his doctrine.

We should add that we were as far as possible from ascribing to Dr. Bain the doctrine we have just named, in the cruder and more obvious sense which many of his expressions would bear. On the contrary, every one who reads our first essay carefully, will see what very great pains we took to interweave his various dicta—which are not very easily susceptible of mutual reconciliation—into one consistent theory.

But now we reply, secondly, that no words could possibly be more express than those we used in *disclaiming* by anticipation the precise view which Dr. Bain ascribes to us. He thinks we hold Determinists, as such, responsible for the thesis that the will is never influenced by "disinterested motives;" or, in other words, that the mind is

never attracted towards action, except by the thought of personal enjoyment, positive or negative, in one or other shape. Now, no doubt, we held *Dr. Bain himself* responsible for this thesis, for the simple reason that, as has been seen, he distinctly expressed it. But we went out of our way to explain, with most unmistakable clearness, that our argument against Determinism was not in the slightest degree affected by the cross controversy which Dr. Bain now raises. As the matter is of much importance, we will inflict on our readers a repetition of our whole passage.

As it is very important to avoid all possibility of cavil, it will be perhaps better to add one further explanation of the exact point at issue. Mr Mill and Dr Bain hold, that in each case the spontaneous impulse or inclination of the will is determined by *the balance of immediate pleasure*; and, taking into account the various explanations they give of their statement, we are so far entirely in accord with them. But our own essential argument would not be affected in the slightest degree, if this theory of theirs were disproved. And it is worth while, at the risk of being thought tedious, to make this clear.

The essence of Determinism is the doctrine that, at any given moment, the will's movement is infallibly and inevitably determined by circumstances (1) internal, and (2) external : *i.e.* (1) by the intrinsic constitution and disposition of the will, and (2) by the external influences which act on it. Now, no one doubts that in every man, during far the larger portion of his waking life, there exists what we have called a definite and decisive spontaneous impulse of his will. And Determinists allege that circumstances, internal and external, determine the will's actual movement, *precisely by determining its spontaneous impulse*. It is the very essence of Determinism therefore to allege that the will's actual movement is never divergent from its spontaneous impulse.

But it is a different question altogether, and one entirely irrelevant to the Deterministic controversy, to inquire *what* is exactly the fixed relation which exists between circumstances on the one hand, and the will's spontaneous impulse on the other. Mr. Mill and Dr. Bain adopt on this question the



balance-of-pleasure theory, and here we agree with them. But quite imaginably philosophers might arise (though we think this very improbable) who should adduce strong arguments for some *different* theory on the subject. Now this, as our readers will see, is a cross controversy altogether, and in no way affects the issue between Determinism and its assailants. We have ourselves assumed, throughout our essay, the balance-of-pleasure theory as confessedly and indisputably true, because (1) we account it the true one, and because (2) it is held by all the Determinists we ever heard of, but nothing would be easier than to mould our argument according to any different theory which might be established. The question between Determinists and ourselves is not at all how the will's spontaneous impulse is *formed*, but exclusively whether it is ever *resisted*. Determinists as such say that it is never resisted, and Indeterminists as such maintain the contrary.

Dr. Bain's second adverse criticism is the following:—

Remarking upon the assertion of the Determinists that the number and complexity of the motive forces are the only obstacles to our foreseeing the course of any one's voluntary decisions—the writer throws upon us the burden of showing that any uncertainty or precariousness of prediction is due to this, and not to the Freedom of men's Will. We reply that this burden, on every principle of evidence, lies upon him. The rule of Nature is uniformity, this is to be accepted in all doubtful cases, until an exception is made good (p. 498).

Here is the paragraph to which we have already referred as containing Dr. Bain's complaint, that we have thrown on Determinists the burden of proof. But, if our readers will refer to that passage of ours on which Dr. Bain comments, they will see that the said passage is no part whatever of our *direct argument*, they will see that it occurs among our *answers to objections*. We had already given grounds—such as we have exhibited in the earlier part of our present essay—for holding that the contradictory of Determinism is among the most certain, nay, the most obvious, of psychological facts. In our appeal to these facts we threw no burden of proof whatever on Dr.

Bain or any other Determinist. Nothing could be more aggressive than our whole line of argument; nor, we may add, did we rest any part of that argument on the experienced impossibility of predicting human acts. Having established, as we consider, our doctrine, we proceeded to encounter the various objections against it which Determinists have alleged. Among these objections is one founded on "the number and complexity" of those attractions which at any given moment solicit the will. Dr Bain entirely admits that there is great "uncertainty and precariousness" in any attempt to predict future human actions. We ascribe this fact, in a considerable degree, to Freewill; *he* ascribes it exclusively to that "number and complexity" of attractions which we just now mentioned. On this allegation of his we commented as follows:—"Nowhere," we said, "has any Determinist whatever attempted to show that this uncertainty and precariousness of prediction is due exclusively to the number and complexity of attractions; that it is not largely due to the Freedom of men's Will. Yet, until they have shown this, they have shown nothing worth so much as a pin's head towards the establishment of their theory." Our own argument, as we just now mentioned, was entirely independent of this particular question. Still, if (*per impossibile*) Determinists had been able to show that human conduct is capable of being predicted with certainty in the abstract,\*—they would have adduced an argument as irrefragable on their side as ours is on our side; and the net result would have been a contradiction in terms. We pointed out, therefore, that not only Determinists have not shown this, but that they have not even *attempted* to show it. These thinkers—so intolerant of *a priori* theories, so earnest

\* By the phrase "capable of being predicted in the abstract," we mean "capable in itself of being predicted capable of being predicted, therefore, by a person of superhuman and adequate intelligence, who should thoroughly penetrate the antecedent facts."

in upholding an exclusive appeal to experience, — in this particular allegation of theirs have not so much as *attempted* any appeal to experience. They base their conclusions entirely on *a priori* theories; nay, on *a priori* theories of what we must really call the very flimsiest character.

THIS most strange circumstance, we say, is exhibited on the very surface by that paragraph of Dr. Bain's which we have last quoted. He does not *profess* to prove the uniform sequence of human voluntary acts by any *observation* of such acts. His belief in the uniform sequence of those acts is based on considerations which he cannot himself pretend to be anything stronger than conjectures, more or less probable, derived from analogy. Even had these conjectures possessed indefinitely greater force in the way of probability than we can for a moment admit,—what, nevertheless, could possibly be their value? What could possibly be the value of mere conjecture—*probable* conjecture, if you will—when opposed to certain and constant experience? What can possibly be the value of mere probability, on one side, when weighed against absolute certainty on the other? But, in real truth, Dr. Bain's conjectural inferences do not carry with them so much as the slightest appearance of probability, unless he begins by *assuming*, on his own side, what is the one vital and fundamental point of difference between him and his opponents. A very few words will make this clear.

No doubt, it is admitted by every one that all physical, and a large number of psychical, phenomena proceed ordinarily \* in the way of constant and uniform sequence. Therefore, argues Dr. Bain, it may be taken for granted, as a matter of course, unless the contrary be proved, that those psychical phenomena which are called acts of will,

\* "Ordinarily," for we need not here discuss the question of miracles, on which we speak in the later portion of our essay

*also* proceed in the way of constant and uniform sequence. Certainly, we consider that we *have* proved most conclusively the contradictory of this. But what we are now urging is that—apart altogether from proof on our side—Dr. Bain's inference is utterly fallacious on *his*, unless he *assume* what is the one vital and fundamental point at issue between him and the opposite school. The general uniformity of Nature, we say, does not afford the very slightest presumption that all acts of *the human will* are included in this uniformity—unless it be *assumed* that there is no such thing in *rerum naturâ* as morality in the Christian sense, nor any Moral Governor of the world. If there is a God Who rewards and punishes human acts, it is involved in the very notion of such a doctrine that human acts are free. The presumption, therefore, on which Dr. Bain relies, is, on the surface, palpably irrelevant, except as addressed to those who have already denied that there is a Moral Governor of the world. That an Atheist, in whatever way he veils his Atheism, will certainly repudiate Freewill—this is the very last thing we care to dispute. In our view, he has already given up all which to a reasonable man makes life worth the living; and Freewill to him would be the most inexplicable of portents.

Dr. Bain thus proceeds :—

The writer is surprised that no one has remarked what he admits to be a difficulty in Freewill, namely, that the power of resisting vicious impulses is so rarely exercised. The truth is, in the eyes of the scientific psychologists, Freewill, maintained purely as an aid to virtue, is an anomalous position, and not capable of being argued on the ordinary grounds of mental doctrines. If our consciousness seems to show something distinct from the uniform sequence of motive and act, it shows that equally for all sorts of conduct, the restriction to virtuous conduct is purely arbitrary, and, as already said, is not a psychological but a theological assumption (pp. 498, 499).

There is one clause in this paragraph which we desire

to note, as the only one which indicates any perception whatever on Dr. Bain's part of what our line of argument had been. In this clause, and in this alone, he exhibits some vague kind of surmise, that we had appealed to "consciousness" as "showing in human action something distinct from the uniform sequence of motive and act." Why did he not extend his investigation further, and at least learn what were those particular *facts* of consciousness on which we relied?

Otherwise there is a certain difficulty in dealing with the paragraph before us, because it appears to confuse two totally distinct passages of ours. However, our obvious course will be to cite and defend the two in succession. In our first essay on the subject we thus wrote:—

We need hardly say that, in our view, devout Theists are immeasurably the most virtuous class of human beings. Consequently, in our view, devout Theists will, with absolute certainty, immeasurably exceed other men in their anti-impulsive efforts; for the simple reason that they immeasurably exceed other men in the vigilant care with which they adjust their volitions with a standard which they consider supremely authoritative.

And we thus supplemented the above:—

Nor has the determinist any right to ignore such facts, because he himself may believe that no God is cognizable, and that devout Theism is a superstition. If it be unmistakably proved that those who hold and act on a certain belief (however *untrue* he may consider that belief) do put forth great, or indeed any, anti-impulsive effort, he is bound in reason to abandon his theory.

If Dr. Bain is referring to these passages, he entirely misunderstands us when he says that we "maintain Free-will purely as an aid to virtue." We hold most strongly that those who follow without resistance their will's spontaneous impulse are no whit less *free* in their act than

those who resist it.\* We did not say that devout Theists "immeasurably exceed other men" in the number of their *free acts*, but in the frequency, or at least in the intensity, of "their *anti-impulsive efforts*." We were occupied in showing how undeniable a mental phenomenon it is, that men do from time to time resist their preponderating spontaneous impulse. "Even the mass of men who live mainly" or entirely "for this world, by no means" rarely, nay, with considerable frequency, "do oppose themselves to the spontaneous impulse of their will" But devout Theists put forth immeasurably stronger and more sustained anti-impulsive effort than any other class; and it is by studying, therefore, the phenomena of *their* interior lives, that by far the most striking and emphatic proof of our thesis will be obtained.

If Dr. Bain asks *why* it is that Theists so very much exceed other men in the intensity and persistency of anti-impulsive effort, we gave a most intelligible reason. It is because "they immeasurably exceed other men in the vigilant care with which they adjust their volitions by a standard which they regard as supremely authoritative." Mr. H. W. Lucas, in the course of three very able articles on Freewill contributed to the *Month* (February, April, June, 1878)—articles in which he frequently refers to our own with much kindness of expression—thus develops our statement:—

Christian asceticism teaches a man to value the inward intention rather than the external deed. It teaches him to "watch his heart," to observe his thoughts, and to direct them as often as possible by positive acts to God, the end of his whole being. It brings prominently before his mind the practice of self-

\* We said in the essay quoted in the text that it will "in various ways be more convenient," when engaged in answering mere objections, to consider those objections as brought, not merely against Indeterminism, but against the full doctrine of Freewill. "Nor," we added, "is such a procedure in any way unfair to our opponents, but the very contrary, for it does but offer them a larger target to shoot at."

control as a most important exercise of the interior life. In short, it is hardly necessary to insist that the habit of "recollection" necessarily tends to multiply the daily number of . . . choiceful acts. Take, on the other hand, the case of a man who has no belief in the supernatural. He, too, often resists the greatest present impulse, either for the sake of others or with a view to his own greater advantage in the future. But he does not value the practice of self-control as a constant means of meriting in the sight of an All-seeing Dispenser of reward and retribution. The self-control which he does exercise tends to become habitual—in other words, tends to embody itself in a new set of impulses, and his wish must be so to establish prudential and benevolent impulses in the mind, that foresight and benevolence may be frictionless. and there is no tendency to any higher kind of effort. Whereas, for the Christian ascetic, there are simply no limits to the process of self-perfection. He, too, endeavours to establish and cultivate virtuous impulses, but each set of such impulses once established becomes for him a platform from which to mount upwards to higher exercises of self-control.

According to our own humble view, then, all men—good, middling, and bad alike—are equally free. But good men exercise their freedom very largely in *resisting* their preponderating spontaneous impulse; whereas it is characteristic of bad men, as such, that they so largely exercise their liberty in *abstaining* from that resistance to spontaneous impulse, which nevertheless is fully in their power.

But we are disposed to think that there is another psychological doctrine altogether entirely distinct from Indeterminism, which Dr. Bain has greatly in his mind, when he makes the comment we have just quoted. It is a fundamental principle of Catholic theology and philosophy that no one acts wickedly for wickedness' sake (*propter malitiam*). Thus, it happens that the philosophies of good and of evil acts proceed respectively on a mutually different basis. He who is to act virtuously must in some sense pursue virtue.\* But the converse by no means

\* So Dr. Mivart "For an act to be good, it must be really directed by

holds, that he who acts wickedly is in any sense pursuing wickedness; for his wickedness precisely consists in his inordinate and, so to speak, unprincipled pursuit of *pleasure*. In a later part of our series we hope to set forth this great verity, with its psychological proof, as clearly and as fully as we can. Here we are only concerned with it incidentally, as throwing possible light upon the origin of Dr. Bain's mistake. Libertarians speak of Freewill as exercised in the direction of pursuing virtue, and again as exercised in the direction of pursuing pleasure, but never as exercised in the direction of pursuing wickedness. Moreover, they hold that *self-restraining* exercise of Freewill, or what we have called anti-impulsive effort, is with quite immeasurably greater frequency put forth in the direction of virtue than of pleasure, because pleasure, of course, has only too great attractiveness of its own. Dr. Bain may have observed these statements, and inferred from them that Libertarians "maintain Freewill purely as an aid to virtue." But such a statement, as we have pointed out, implies a complete misapprehension of the doctrine we advocate.

Lastly, we must entirely deny Dr. Bain's allegation, that what we affirm is in any kind of way a "theological assumption." Doubtless, in arguing on philosophical ground against philosophers, we should be guilty of an intolerable sophism if we based our argument in any degree upon any *theological* doctrine—i.e. on any doctrine which we do not claim to know otherwise than through Revelation. But not only we made no appeal to any such doctrine, we made no appeal even to Theism: which it would of course, indeed, have been grossly paralogistic to do, since we are maintaining Freewill as a premiss towards the *establishment* of Theism. We thought we had made all

the door to a good end, either actually or virtually. The idea of good, which he has in the past apprehended, must be influencing the man at the time, whether he adverts to it or not, otherwise the action is not moral" ("Lessons from Nature," p. 118)



this quite clear in a passage which we just now quoted. The Determinist's theory is, that no man resists his strongest present impulse; and his theory, therefore, is conclusively and finally refuted if it be shown that any one man—and much more if it be shown that a large class of men—do often resist their strongest present impulse. The refutation of Determinism would be none the less irrefragable, though these resisters of their strongest present impulse were the most ignorant, the most superstitious, the most degraded of mankind. The appeal is made, not to any religious doctrine whatever, but to an observed psychical fact.

So much on the particular passage above quoted from our essay. But there is another entirely distinct passage, in quite a different part of that essay, to which, we fancy, Dr. Bain may partially refer. Here it is:—

One objection remains of a far more serious character, though it has not been adduced either by Mr. Mill or Dr. Bain, or, so far as we know, by any other writer of their school. "If all men," it may be asked, "possess so real a power of resisting their will's spontaneous impulse, how does it happen that this power is by comparison so inconsiderably exercised?" Against Catholics in particular as *ad homines* the same difficulty may be still more urgently pressed, "You hold that Catholics at least have full moral power, not only to avoid mortal sin, but to make the pleasing God the one predominant end of their life. Yet how few and far between are those of whom you will even allege that they do this—how amazingly few on the supposition that all have the needful power!" The difficulty here sketched demands the most earnest attention, but its treatment would carry us into a line of thought entirely different in kind from what has occupied us in our present essay. We will therefore defer its discussion to a future opportunity, content with having shown, by our mention of it, how very far we are from ignoring it or wishing to pass it over.

The reason for our having introduced, in some sense prematurely, these considerations, may be briefly stated.

The ultimate purpose of our series, as we have so often explained, is to use these preliminary doctrines—Free-will, the reasonable basis of Morality, the principle of Causation, etc.—as so many steps towards the argumentative establishment of Theism. Now, the main consideration on which modern antitheists predominantly dwell—that which is both in itself immeasurably their most powerful stronghold, and is felt by them to be so—is the existence upon earth of *evil*, in that degree and kind which experience testifies. In our view, we frankly avow, all other religious difficulties put together do not even approach in gravity to this difficulty, though it stood alone. The contemplation of the world's existent state is, as F. Newman says, “a vision to dizzy and appal; and inflicts upon the mind the sense of a profound mystery, which is absolutely beyond human solution.” If, then, in our treatment of Theism we did not place practically and emphatically before our readers the full character and dimensions of this difficulty, it would be better not to write on our theme at all. Surely to say this is no exaggeration, but the simplest common sense. For what kind of persuasiveness could the advocate of Theism hope to exercise, who should be felt by his opponents—or again, which is even more important, by seriously perplexed inquirers—not really to *apprehend* that antitheistic argument which weighs with them more than do all the rest put together? We thought it, therefore, of great importance to show from the earliest moment how fully our mind is occupied, how deeply penetrated, by the truly tremendous facts on which antitheists lay such prominent stress. Now, that portion of our series in which we catch, as it were, the first glimpse of this bewildering enigma is the discussion of Freewill; and we would not, therefore, allow that discussion to pass without showing that we carefully bore the difficulty in mind with a view to its future examination. It is not, of course, until we shall

have set forth the absolutely impregnable basis on which Theism reposes that the opportune moment will have arrived for directly and, we hope, unflinchingly confronting the whole difficulty.

For the moment, however, we have nothing to do with this difficulty, except so far as it may be accounted a refutation of the Freewill doctrine; and, considered in this narrow point of view, it is most easily disposed of. We claim to have established Indeterminism on absolutely irrefragable psychological grounds; and we further allege, that the arguments to be adduced in the second part of our present paper develop with certainty the doctrine of Indeterminism into the full doctrine of Freewill. Now, the facts to which we draw attention in the above-quoted paragraph have not even the *primâ facie* appearance of *contradicting* this great doctrine. The thesis which, as we hold, we shall have conclusively established is that the human will is free to resist its preponderating spontaneous impulse. The fact to which Dr. Bain draws attention is, that this power, if it exist, is at all events exercised in a comparatively inconsiderable degree, at least as regards persistence and intensity. Well, there is not here even the *primâ facie* appearance of *contradiction*. To say that a certain power exists, is not even *primâ facie* incompatible with saying that it is comparatively little exercised. Let us take a somewhat grotesque illustration. Dr. Bain does not doubt that the immense majority of adults possess a permanent power of standing for a short time on one leg; yet out of the million millions who possess this power, how many and how often are they in the habit of exercising it? The utmost which can be said is, that the fact to which we draw attention renders the doctrine of Freewill an *improbable* one. Well, let us concede so much, at least for argument's sake. Still, whereas the *objection* to Freewill cannot possibly be alleged as going beyond the sphere of

*probability*, the argument in its *favour* is irresistibly *conclusive*. And probability on one side, we need not say, is simply worthless against certainty on the other.

Dr. Bain proceeds :—

Libertarians admit that to strengthen a good motive by good education, inculcation, or other means, and obversely to weaken some vicious motive, would have the very same effect as the supposed outburst of the free and uncaused will. Why not, therefore, be content with an assumption that is thoroughly consistent with the whole of Nature's working, rather than admit an exceptional principle that hardly admits of intelligible wording? (p 499).

We protest at starting against Dr. Bain using the terms "free" and "uncaused" as synonymous; but on this we are to speak in the second part of our paper.

Secondly, it is strange we should have to impress on Dr. Bain that what he represents all Libertarians as *admitting* is precisely what we emphatically and energetically *deny*. To "strengthen a motive," using the word "motive" in Dr. Bain's sense, has an effect fundamentally and most pointedly different from that produced by an "outburst of Freewill." By "strengthening a good motive," or, as we should express it, by intensifying the influence of some healthy attraction, I change for the better my will's preponderating spontaneous impulse; but an "outburst" of freedom is characteristically manifested by *resistance* to such impulse.

Thirdly, Dr. Bain asks why we should not be "content" with his "assumption." He speaks as though the controversy between him and us were of no very serious and vital matter; whereas the ultimate question is nothing less than this, whether there be or be not a Moral Governor of the world. We should have thought antitheists were at one with Theists in distinctly recognizing that what is at issue between the two parties is about the most momentous and awful alternative which can agitate the human mind.

Dr. Bain continues:—

The writer in the *Dublin Review* allows that “in proportion as men have passed through the earlier part of their probation, and established firm habits of virtue, in that proportion their resistance to predominant temptation (but only within certain limits \*) may be predicted with much confidence” But if good habits and good training do so much, how do we know that they are not the sole and sufficient cause of moral goodness? And how can we find out where their influence ceases, and the influence of an unpredictable volition begins? (p. 499).

Dr. Bain here expresses himself as though we considered all free acts absolutely unpredictable; whereas, in the very paragraph which he quotes from us, we were arguing that free acts are by no means entirely incapable of more or less approximate prediction. Mr. Mill had argued that human action is in greater degree predictable than it would be if man possessed Freewill. We maintained against him “that no power of foreseeing man’s conduct can be alleged as known by experience, which presents even the superficial appearance of implying any greater certainty and uniformity of human action than might have been fully anticipated from our own doctrine.” As part of our argument for this thesis, we wrote the passage which Dr. Bain quotes. “In many cases (such was our remark) even that standing refutation of Determinism—a man’s resistance to predominant temptation †—may be predicted with much confidence. Suppose A have acquired a strong habit of resistance to evil impulses, and

\* Dr Bain italicises these five words

† In our essay on Mill’s “Denial of Freewill,” we explained what we meant by the phrase “predominant temptation” “A person,” we pointed out, “may be said to be visited by ‘temptation’ whenever he is solicited by any attraction to forbidden pleasure, even though that attraction be more than counter-balanced by other divergent ones. By using the term ‘predominant’ temptation, then, we refer to a case in which the attractions towards forbidden pleasure predominate over other co-existing attractions, so that the will’s preponderating spontaneous impulse is in a sinful direction”

suppose the predominant temptation which at any given moment assails him be inconsiderable, the fact that he resists predominant temptation *at all* is a conclusive proof of his freedom ; but, nevertheless, if I know him intimately, I can predict as a matter of extreme probability that he *will* resist. Nevertheless my power of probable prediction does not extend beyond certain limits." Let the predominant temptation be, on another occasion, indefinitely *stronger*—I may be in the greatest doubt and anxiety as to how he will comport himself under his probation. What can be simpler and more intelligible than this ?

There is one little matter, however, here which still requires explanation, though Dr. Bain has not referred to it. In our article, we thus argued ; and we have quoted the passage in a previous page. "What," we asked, "can 'motives,' or 'circumstance,' or 'temperament,' or 'habit,' or 'custom,' imaginably do for me, except to effect that my *desire* shall be this rather than that ? How can they imaginably influence my action in those cases where my action is *contrary* to my strongest present desire ?" Yet in the passage cited by Dr. Bain we have averred that habit can be of very important service, not only as effecting that my present strongest desire shall be this rather than that, but also, and even more importantly, in facilitating my *resistance* to my strongest present desire. Are not these two statements, it may be asked, mutually contradictory ?

The direct answer to this objection is extremely simple. We placed the words "habit," "motives," and the rest within inverted commas, to show that we were using them in the sense given them by Determinists. Now, we explained, that Dr. Bain in his whole treatment of moral habits—and we suppose all other Determinists do the same—entirely omits all reference to that most important factor in the formation of a moral habit, the will's repeated

anti-impulsive efforts. This is, so far, to his philosophical credit, as he shows entire consistency in shutting his eyes to that psychical fact—men's repeated resistance to their strong present desire—on which we have throughout laid such prominent stress. And we still entirely hold what we set forth: we hold that "habit," as described by Dr. Bain, cannot imaginably "do anything for me, except to effect that my" strongest present "desire shall be this rather than that."

It will be far more satisfactory, however, if we do not content ourselves with this logically sufficient reply; if we add a few words on the relation which exists between moral habit on the one side, and anti-impulsive effort on the other. First, however, we would remind our readers that the fact itself of men resisting their strongest present desire is, as we have so often urged, by itself a standing demonstration of Indeterminism. And we would especially insist on the very obvious circumstance, that this demonstration is no whit less irrefragable—if only the *fact* of resistance be admitted—whatever the degree of *facility* with which, in any given case, the resistance may be accomplished. The essential doctrine of Determinism is, that men, by the very constitution of their nature, inevitably obey their strongest present desire. This allegation is conclusively refuted by one single *fact* of resistance; the question of greater or less *facility* being simply irrelevant.

These remarks being premised, we are now to consider the permanent effect produced on a man's mind, in the way of habit, by a sufficient series of anti-impulsive efforts.

It will be found, on consideration, we believe, that this effect consists of two entirely different particulars. We are not, of course, attempting to set forth in detail the full theory of habits, but only saying so much as is required for our immediate purpose. And we will take, by way of

illustration, an instance to which we have more than once referred : the instance of some brave soldier receiving a most bitter insult, and taking it patiently. In time past he has received many such insults, greater or less as it may be, and in every instance by a strong anti-impulsive effort (united, doubtless, with earnest prayer—but that is not to our present purpose) has compelled himself to behave Christianly under the temptation. One effect of these repeated acts will have been importantly to elevate what, on any given occasion, is his will's preponderating spontaneous impulse. There is many a little insult he now receives which some years ago would have generated a spontaneous predominant desire of retaliation, but which now engenders no such predominant desire whatever : his will's strongest present *desire* is to forgive the offender. Let us suppose, however, that the insult is of a specially stinging character, and that his will's preponderating spontaneous impulse is in the evil direction. Here the *second* good result of his previous anti-impulsive efforts comes into clear view and into practical exercise. He finds it far easier now than he did ten years ago, to "conquer nature" (as ascetical writers say), and to resist his strongest present desire. Here, then, are two quite different results effected in his mind by his past anti-impulsive efforts. Firstly, his will's spontaneous impulse on any given occasion is much more in the direction of virtue than would otherwise have been the case, and, secondly, his resistance to a preponderating spontaneous evil impulse (should such arise) is much readier and easier than it would otherwise have been. Dr. Bain, in his theory of moral habit, sees clearly enough the first of these two results, but is entirely blind to the second.

He next argues thus :—

The existence of such an uncertain power [as Freewill] is as likely to discourage as to encourage the understood means of



virtuous training; unless we suppose that the Freewill impulse is a grant proportioned to the goodness of the previous training (p. 499).

It is a continually increasing surprise how it can be that a thinker of Dr. Bain's great ability and generally keen psychological insight, so persistently fails in catching even a glimpse of what his opponents mean. What Libertarian ever called "the Freewill impulse" a "*grant*"? According to Libertarians, it is precisely and critically the contradictory of a "*grant*;" being the agent's own self-determined choice. God grants to men, no doubt, the *power* of free choice; but it is implied in the very idea of that power that the choice itself is no grant from God at all.

Next comes the argument, which Determinists are very fond of adducing, that belief in Freewill "is as likely to discourage as to encourage the understood means of virtuous training." We replied to this argument in our first essay on the subject. We set forth the immense value of virtuous training and habits; and we dwelt on these as one principal cause of "the indubitable fact that very frequently the spontaneous impulse of a devout Theist's will is one of high virtue." We also drew attention to the "very frequent phenomenon," "that a devout man—even when his will's spontaneous impulse leads to a virtuous act—proceeds, nevertheless, by an effort to make his act more virtuous (i.e. more efficaciously directed to the virtuous end) than otherwise it would be." The advantage, then, of virtuous training and habits is not less inestimably great on the Libertarian than on the Deterministic hypothesis. Who, indeed, in the whole world are more urgent than Catholics in upholding the necessity of careful religious education? Yet who are more uncompromising advocates of Freewill?

We have now quoted textually every syllable in which

Dr. Bain directly replies to our essay. But a page follows, occupied with miscellaneous denunciations of that doctrine which is so distasteful to him. Freewill, if it existed, would be a "mysterious uncertainty that baffles all prediction" (p. 499); its acts would be a series of "caprices" "that no man could predict, and, therefore, no man trust to" (p. 500); it would be a power which may "forsake a man in some critical moment when he most wants it;" "a power that comes from nothing, has no beginning, follows no rule, respects no known time or occasion ['], operates without impartiality" [! !] (*Ibid.*). In one word, this alleged Freewill is "an influence that we can take no account of, that we do not know how to conciliate or to appease; an inscrutable fate, realizing all the worst results that have ever been attributed to the sternest deliverances of the necessitarian and the fatalist" (*Ibid.*). It seems almost impossible to grapple with such wild statements as these. According to Dr. Bain, when I say that within a certain sphere I can act as I choose, this is equivalent to saying that, within the said sphere, I am governed by an "inscrutable fate" external to myself. In other words, to say that I have *full* control over my actions is to say that I have no control over them whatever. The "deliverances of the necessitarian and the fatalist" he admits to be "stern;" but to say that I am neither fated nor necessitated, he accounts still sterner. He has failed to explain, however, what third alternative remains.

Perhaps it will be more satisfactory if we place the issue before our readers in a concrete shape. And we begin with a very obvious remark. The doctrine of Freewill, which we are to discuss, must be the doctrine of Freewill, not as travestied by its opponents, but as clothed in that particular shape in which its advocates hold it. Dr. Bain, we say, was bound to contemplate the doctrine, not from his own religious or non-religious standpoint, but from the

standpoint of those who are zealous for its maintenance. But who are these? Indubitably they are the thinkers who consider the one fundamental verity of man's life to be God's moral government of the world; who hold as the one true principle of human action, that good acts meet with divine reward, and evil acts with divine chastisement. Such a man knows, let us say, that in a short time he will be visited by some serious temptation, and is full of anxiety as to the issue. Determinists tell him: "Whether you do or do not resist this temptation, is an alternative no more within your power than is the alternative whether to-morrow will be a fine day or rainy. The result depends exclusively and infallibly on circumstances, external and internal, over which you have no control whatever." He replies at once that if this were the true law of human action, it would be as unjust in the Creator to punish him for evil actions as for evil dreams. Far different is the language of Libertarians. "The whole issue," they tell him, "rests critically and in the last resort simply with yourself. Begin at once to pray God for strength; impress carefully on your mind the motives which will avail you in your trial; work at this day after day; when the decisive moment comes, place your trust in God, and put forth at the same time your own hearty effort. Do all this, and success is absolutely certain. Such preparatory exercises may be somewhat irksome, and the crowning effort itself will, no doubt, be in some sense distasteful; but God has given you the power, as experience will at once show you, to resist your will's preponderating impulse, and to overcome all the difficulties which lie in your path. *Sursum corda.*" Here is an intelligible and consoling doctrine, which every moral agent can take and use to his unspeakable blessedness, and which places God's moral governance before his eyes as a living and satisfying reality. But Determinists, who follow Dr. Bain's lead, tell him that such advice would make him

place his trust in "caprices of his will, which no man can predict, and, therefore, no man can trust to;" in an agency "which may forsake him in some critical moment when he most wants it," in "an influence that he can take no account of, nor know how to conciliate or appease;" in "an inscrutable fate realizing all the worst results that have ever been attributed to the sternest deliverances of the necessitarian or the fatalist." Surely all this is more like the invective of a rhetorician than the utterances of a grave philosopher.

Here, then, having replied in detail to the whole of Dr. Bain's reply, we close the first part of our paper.

#### CAUSATION AND FREEWILL.

In our reply to Dr. Bain's objections we have made ourselves responsible, as we explained in a note, for the full doctrine of Freewill. But our readers will remember that in our positive exposition we have not advanced beyond the psychological doctrine of "Indeterminism." Determinists allege, as an observed psychical fact, "that volitions follow determinate moral antecedents with the same uniformity and the same certainty as physical effects follow their physical causes;" that the will's course of action is infallibly and inevitably determined at every moment by the circumstances (1) internal, (2) external, of that moment. We have entirely denied this alleged psychical fact, in support of that denial we have appealed to a thousand undeniable mental phenomena; and by so doing have established, we consider, the doctrine of Indeterminism. This doctrine, however, is purely a negative one; it is simply the doctrine that the doctrine of Determinism is false. Our next step must be, by introducing the metaphysical principle of Causation, to develop the negative psychological doctrine of Indeterminism into the positive metaphysical doctrine of Freewill. It will not be requisite

to elaborate our present argument with any extraordinary care, because all the essential part of our controversy with the Determinists has now been brought to an end. There never has been, and there never will be, a philosopher who, on the one hand, admits the doctrine of Indeterminism, and also that doctrine of Causation maintained by us in our essay on that subject, who, on the other hand, would hesitate for a moment to accept the entire doctrine of Freewill.

It will be in many ways convenient, if we here reproduce that portion of our then remarks, in our essay on Causation, which has a more especial bearing on the Freewill question. And, in particular, we must remind our readers of the fundamentally different sense in which the word "cause" is used by Phenomenists, who are always Determinists, and by Intuitionists respectively. This distinction requires especially to be borne in mind, when we are engaged with our present theme. Determinists uniformly allege that the doctrine of Freewill represents certain voluntary actions as being external to the sphere of "causation," whereas, in the Libertarian's view, it is precisely *free* acts which testify the principle of "causation" more prominently and emphatically than do any other mental phenomena whatever. It is really astounding—this is not too strong a word—to observe how uniformly Determinists\* forget (what it is impossible they should not know) that they use the word "causation" in a sense fundamentally different from that given it by the opposite school.

For instance: the Phenomenist and Intuitionist agree in saying that the sun "causes" light and warmth.\* But

\* We do not forget the theory of that excellent philosopher, Dr. Martineau—a theory hardly different from what is called "occasionalism"—that no substance can be a true "cause" unless it be intelligent. This theory, however, is comparatively rare among Intuitionists, and it will be more convenient to ignore it in our text. There is no Theistic conclusion,

by so speaking, the Phenomenist only means that that phenomenon which is 'called the sun's presence is "universally and unconditionally" (to use Mr. Mill's phrase) followed by those two other groups of phenomena, which are called the presence of light and of warmth. He recognizes no kind of "influx" or "agency" in the sun, as regards the production of light and warmth. He recognizes no closer nexus between the sun and the sensation of warmth than between the first letter of the alphabet and the second; or between the moment of time which we call "eleven o'clock" and the moment of time which we call "five minutes past eleven." In one word, by "causation" he means no more than "uniform phenomenal sequence." But, according to the Intuitionist's view, as exhibited by us in our essay on Causation, the case is very different. The idea of "cause" is as entirely distinct from that of "phenomenal sequence," as any one idea in the whole world is distinct from any other. That very notion of "influx" or "agency," which a Phenomenist *excludes* from the idea of "cause"—is the precise notion which an Intuitionist *expresses* by that term. Such was our statement in the essay we refer to, and we will here quote a portion of what we then set forth —

"The idea 'cause,' " we said, "is a simple idea not composed of any others, \* and, on the other hand, it is a purely intellectual idea, not a copy of any thing experienced by the senses. Now, of course," we added, "there is a certain difficulty in explaining an idea of this

we believe, which we purport to establish by our method, which Dr Martineau could not equally establish by his. But it would be most inconveniently periphrastical if we laboured so to construct our language throughout as to include his theory. And at last, for reasons given in our essay on Causation, we must be permitted (in a spirit removed most widely from any disrespect) to account that theory a mistaken one.

\* We explained that by the word "cause" we throughout meant what Catholic philosophers call "the efficient cause." Moreover, we exclude the "moral cause," which they usually include under "the efficient."

kind. Were it a copy of some sensation, we could content ourselves with referring to such sensation. Were it a compound of simpler ideas, we could explain it by reciting those simpler ideas. But neither of these methods being (by hypothesis) available, we can only suggest the occasions on which an inquirer may unmistakably recognize what is undoubtedly a very prominent part of his mental furniture. Now, the illustration commonly given by philosophers of a 'cause' seems to us most happily chosen; as the very one in which that idea is exhibited with especial distinctness and prominence. We refer to the influx of a man's volitions into his bodily acts. I am urgently in need of some article contained in a closet of which I cannot find the key, and accordingly I break open the closet with my fist. Certainly my idea of the relation which exists between my volition and my blow, is most absolutely distinct from that of universal and unconditional sequence. If, on the one hand, the idea of 'cause' is incapable of being analyzed, on the other hand it is to the full as incapable of being explained away or misapprehended. The idea is as characteristic and as clamorously distinguished from every other, as is that of 'sweet,' or 'melodious,' or 'white'. Phenomenists may deny that it corresponds with any objective reality; but they cannot deny that it is in fact conceived by the human mind, without exposing themselves to the intellectual contempt of every one who possesses the most ordinary intelligence and introspective faculty." Then, so much being understood as to the meaning of this word "cause," Intuitionists maintain that this indubitably existing idea does correspond with an objective reality. And when, therefore, they say that the sun "causes" light and warmth, they mean, not that that phenomenon which is called the sun's presence is uniformly and unconditionally followed by those other groups of phenomena which are called the presence of light and

warmth, but that that *substance*, which is called the sun, exercises a *power*, which they call the "causal" power, of *diffusing* light and warmth.

It is implied, we may add, in their whole notion of a "cause," that a cause must be one or other *substance*. When they mention the influx of my volition into some blow which I deal forth, they would thus explain their meaning in detail. The blow is nothing else than a certain movement of my closed hand. The cause of that movement is my soul; which addresses, if we may so speak, to my hand that command, which is called a "volition."

It seems to us accordingly of great importance that, in all philosophical discussion, an Intuitionist shall abstain with great care from using this word "causation" in the sense which Phenomenists give to it. Yet what they call "causation" is so extremely important a fact, and so constantly requires the philosopher's notice, that some expression for it is a kind of necessity. Accordingly we took the liberty of coining a terminology for the purpose. Throughout what remains, therefore, of our series, we shall use the word "prevenant," to express what Phenomenists call a "cause;" "postvenant," to express what they call an "effect," "prevenance," to express what they call "causation."

It will be understood, then, at once, that what they call "the law of causation," and we call "the law of prevenance," is simply the well-known law of *uniform phenomenal sequence*. It is no difficult matter to understand what is meant by that law, and we have nowhere seen it more clearly set forth than in some sentences of Mr. Mill's, which we quoted in our essay. As we pointed out, however, in the same essay, even in regard to the *existence* of this law, there is a very important difference between Phenomenists and Intuitionists. The former consider it absolutely universal; whereas Intuitionists regard it as



generally holding, indeed, but nevertheless as subject to two important exceptions. "In the first place, they hold that this uniformity of nature is interrupted with indefinite frequency by miracles and other prodigies. And in the second place, they maintain," as we have been maintaining in our present paper, "that one most important class of psychical phenomena—viz. human volitions—are largely external to the common law of uniformity."

Having made clear, then, what we meant by "cause," we proceeded to take a further step. We proceeded to set forth what appear to us conclusive psychological grounds for holding, as a self-evident truth, as a philosophical axiom, that "whatever has a commencement has a cause." This we called the "doctrine" or "principle" of "causation" or "causality." And when we speak of *psychology* as establishing a *metaphysical* truth, there is, of course, one fundamental premiss on which we build our argument. This premiss is the doctrine which we call "the principle of certitude," and which we have maintained to be the first principle of all possible knowledge. It is the doctrine, that whatever a man's existent cognitive faculties, if rightly interrogated and interpreted, avouch as certain, is thereby *known* to him as certain.

It will conduce to a clear apprehension of our future argument if, before proceeding further, we compare in detail those two theories regarding the phenomenal world which are advocated by the Intuitionist and the Phenomenist respectively. In what immediately follows, therefore, we are not professing to adduce any *argument* whatever; we are merely exhibiting the two antagonistic views, for the purpose of more distinct apprehension. And firstly, to repeat a previous remark, in regard to one particular class of mental phenomena—viz. deliberate acts of human will—the Intuitionist excepts them, whereas the Phenomenist does not except them, from the otherwise prevailing

law of uniform sequence. Putting these, however, on one side, the Intuitionist and Phenomenist alike hold that phenomena, both physical and psychical, ordinarily proceed according to the law of prevenience. The Phenomenist, however, considers that this is an ultimate fact, proved by experience, and in no other way; though we have more than once called on him to adduce, if he can, any even plausible *reason* for his affirmation that experience, taken by itself, would warrant any such conclusion.\* The Intuitionist takes up entirely different ground. He holds that "prevenience" is the *result* of "causation." According, to him, *e.g.*, those groups of phenomena which are called the presence of light and warmth, follow ordinarily on that phenomenon which is called the sun's presence, simply because that *substance* which is called the sun has the causative *power* of *diffusing* light and warmth. And so in every other instance of prevenience. Then this difference of view leads to another, which we should not fail to point out. The Phenomenist and Intuitionist agree, we have said, in holding, that phenomena *ordinarily* proceed according to the law of prevenience. But Intuitionists have no philosophical difficulty whatever in admitting those exceptions to prevenience which are called *miracles*, whereas the Phenomenist, if he would be consistent, must resolutely deny the fact of their existence. Let us assume, *e.g.*, it were alleged on grounds of human testimony, that on one most solemn occasion, the sun, being present, failed to diffuse light. The historical proof of such a statement, for anything we here say, may or may not be satisfactory. But as a matter of *philosophy*, the Intuitionist sees in it no

\* Our own humble opinion is, that the law of prevenience cannot be established as certain by appealing exclusively to facts of experience, and that neither can it be established as certain by appealing exclusively to the principle of causation but that it can be established with certainty by appealing to both these sources of knowledge in mutual combination. This thesis, however, requires to be worked out with great care, and it is entirely external to the course of our own argument

difficulty whatever. In such a case, he would say, the sun's effect does not come into actual existence because of a counteracting effect which is at the same moment produced by the immediate causative act of God. But the Phenomenist is compelled by his philosophical theory, if he be consistent, to be proof against any amount of testimony which may be adduced for such a miraculous fact. In his view, the one sole foundation of human knowledge is men's undeviating experience of phenomenal uniformity. To admit, therefore, that in any one case—still more, that in a series of cases—there has been an experienced *interruption* of that uniformity, would be to overthrow his whole structure of knowledge from its very foundation.

In the view of an Intuitionist, then, there are three different classes of phenomena, for which the philosopher is required to assign a proximate cause.\* First, we will mention those phenomena which he calls free acts of the will, and to what proximate cause he refers *them*, is the very inquiry which we are immediately to institute. Secondly, we may name those phenomena which he accounts miraculous, and the proximate cause of these, in his view, is the First Cause, God. Lastly, we will consider that enormously large series of phenomena, physical and psychical, which proceed according to the law of prevenience. As to physical phenomena—we are distinguishing these for the moment from psychical—their proximate causes are those innumerable physical substances which exist in the universe, each possessing its own permanent properties and forces. It is these substances which, in accordance with their action and interaction, causatively produce those physical phenomena which surround men on all sides, and which proceed according to the law of preve-

\* By a "proximate" cause, we need hardly say, we mean "a substance which produces the effect, without intervention of any other substance." If I am stabbed, the proximate cause of my wound is not the aggressor's hand, but his dagger.

nance. But now as regards those *psychical* phenomena, which proceed in the soul of any given man according to the law of prevenience. Of these there may be in any given man either one proximate cause, or two, but never more. One proximate cause is his soul, possessing its own forces, properties, acquired habits. In many instances, however, whether or no in all, another proximate cause co-operates—viz. his *body*. For his body, in many instances, at least, by its own properties, powerfully conduces to psychical results.

Here, then, we close our exposition, and resume our thread of *argument*. Let us recount in inverse order the three statements we have just made, and see how far we have hitherto adduced sufficient proof of their truth. Firstly, then, as regards those physical and psychical phenomena which proceed according to the law of prevenience, we consider that the statement which we have just made has been conclusively established in our essay on Causation. Secondly, as regards those phenomena which the Intuitionist accounts miraculous, we consider that our statement as yet is entirely unproved. At the present stage of our argument, we have no right whatever to assume that God exists, still less that He works miracles. And now, thirdly, as regards those phenomena of the human will which we have already shown to be outside the law of prevenience, we will proceed without further delay to inquire what is *their* proximate cause. We begin with a preliminary remark.

From the doctrine of causation already laid down, a further conclusion at once results. The sun, we have said, is a proximate cause of light and warmth. But the sun itself had a commencement, and therefore must have a cause. The sun is a cause indeed, but a *caused* cause—an "intermediate" cause. Our present purpose, however, is not to insist at length on this truth, because the more appropriate place for insisting on it will be at that portion

of our series in which we hope hereafter to exhibit the well-known argument for a First Cause. What we here wish to point out, is an extremely important distinction which may imaginably exist between one and another class of these intermediate causes. In regard to those phenomena which proceed according to the law of prevenience, it is manifest that their proximate causes are determined, in any given instance, by strictest necessity to one fixed and definite result. Every such proximate cause has its proper effect marked out for it, and must produce that proper effect neither more nor less. The sun, *e.g.*, must cause at any moment that precise amount of light and warmth, neither exceeding nor falling short, which is determined according to the law of prevenience. If two or more proximate causes are at work together, the effect of one will no doubt be often modified by the effect of the other; but this fact is of course in no way inconsistent with that we have just said. Nor would our remark be less indubitable, though at such moment some preternatural intervention were effected with the course of phenomena. Even on such a supposition, the cause itself, as we have already said, would none the less exercise activity towards its proper effect, though that effect might be prevented from coming into actual existence, because of a counteracting effect simultaneously produced by some *preternatural* cause. In all such cases, then, we say, the proximate cause has its own proper effect marked out for it by strictest and most absolute necessity. Let us call such causes "blind" causes.\* So the sun, the earth, that stone, this knife, the pen I hold, is a "blind" cause of its appropriate effects.

\* The distinction in the text is substantially equivalent to the distinction made by Catholic philosophers between a "necessary" and a "free" cause. But it appeared more appropriate not to use the latter phrase, until the doctrine of Freedom should be established.

We shall make no further reference in our text to cases of preternatural intervention. They do not, as has been seen, at all affect our argument, and we have sufficiently shown that we do not forget their possibility.

Turning from physical to psychical phenomena the same doctrine holds. Let us consider those various psychical phenomena of mine, which proceed according to the law of prevenience. In the case of all these phenomena, it is involved, by hypothesis, in the very constitution of my nature, that, given certain psychical and corporeal antecedents, one definite group of psychical consequents infallibly and inevitably follows. My soul and body then, in jointly producing this phenomenal group, have their proper agency marked out for them by strictest and most absolute necessity: they are causes indeed, but "blind" causes. If it be not too grotesque an illustration, consider what happens when water is boiled in a kettle. The water possesses certain forces and properties of its own; the fire possesses certain forces and properties of its own; and when the two substances are brought into due proximity, they produce by their joint causative agency that phenomenon of the former which is called "boiling." Apply the analogy to any one of my psychical phenomena, which proceeds according to the law of prevenience. My soul possesses certain forces and properties, my body possesses certain forces and properties; and on the occurrence of certain given circumstances, on a certain given occasion, the two substances produce, by their joint causative agency, that phenomenon of the former which is called, *e g.*, an "emotion."

So much, then, on "blind causes." But now we can, at all events, easily *imagine* that there may be what we will call an "origivative" intermediate cause. We can easily imagine that some substance shall not be determined by its superior cause with strict and inevitable necessity to one fixed effect; but, on the contrary, shall be permitted a certain latitude of choice. Nor, again, have we any difficulty in imagining that the very same substance may be necessitated to act as a "blind" cause in regard to one

class of its effects, while nevertheless it can act as an "originate" cause in regard to another class. It is involved, of course, in the whole supposition that the substance, which acts as an originate cause, must be an *intelligent* substance, such as is the human soul. Moreover, whereas we have said that our supposition is an easily *imaginable* one, we are not aware of any philosopher who has attempted to show that it is one intrinsically impossible.

Our readers will, by this time, have anticipated the course which our remarks are to pursue. Let us take the particular case to which we have so often referred. I have just received some stinging insult, and I am at this moment conscious of two entirely different psychical phenomena, which irresistibly force themselves on my attention. One of these is my preponderating spontaneous impulse; which powerfully prompts me to plans of retaliation. The other phenomenon is my firm and unfaltering *resistance* to that impulse. The two phenomena continue in mutual company for a considerable period, and we are now to consider the proximate cause of each. Now, as to the former, we are in one most important respect altogether accordant with the Determinists. We hold, as they do, that by the very constitution of my nature, my preponderating spontaneous impulse follows, by infallible and inevitable consequence, from antecedent phenomena; that it is most strictly determined by the law of prevenience. It results, therefore, from our principles, that the *proximate causes* of this preponderating spontaneous impulse—viz. my soul and my body—are here acting as "blind" causes.

But, now, as to the *accompanying* phenomenon, my *resistance* to this impulse: what is its proximate cause? Its proximate cause is manifestly my soul.\* But, in this

\* For we heartily follow Mr. Lucas (the *Month*, February, 1878, p. 244)

case, does my soul act as a "blind" cause? Most certainly not. A blind cause is necessitated to act according to the law of phenomenal prevenance; whereas we trust we have abundantly shown, both in our previous essays on the subject and in the earlier part of our present paper, that the law of prevenance issues in my preponderating spontaneous impulse, and by no means in my active *resistance* to that impulse. My soul, then, in producing a psychical phenomenon of this latter kind, acts as an "originate" cause: it acts in virtue of a power (which it is thereby shown, within certain limits, to possess) of *choosing an alternative*. As a blind cause, it is co-operating with my body in producing its own preponderating spontaneous impulse; and, at the same moment, as an originate cause, it is effecting its own free *resistance* to that impulse.

And here we would earnestly press on our reader's notice a fact of extreme importance which, we are confident, will be admitted as certain by every one who fairly examines what takes place in his own mind. Consider those various periods of time during which I am occupied in vigorously resisting certain solicitations—*e.g.*, to revengefulness—which intensely beset me. It is a matter of direct, unmistakable, clamorous consciousness that, during those periods, it is my own soul and no external agency which is putting forth active and sustained anti-impulsive effort. Nor, indeed, is this remark less applicable to *all* cases of anti-impulsive effort; though, of course, where the effort is less vigorous, the consciousness of what we speak is less obtrusive.

But more than this may be said. The experience which I obtain even in one such protracted and vehement struggle is amply sufficient to give me an intimate and infallible knowledge of one all-important fact. We refer

in holding that "no one in these days need concern himself to maintain, in scholastic language, a real distinction between the soul and its faculties."



to the fact, that at every moment of the struggle it has depended on my own free choice with what degree of efficacy I have contended against the temptation. We shall have to pursue this subject in some detail on a future occasion.\*

In the above view of originative causation we have not spoken of my *body* as co-operating with my soul, because, as we have already pointed out, an originative cause must necessarily be an intelligent substance. Nor have we hesitated, at last, to use the word "free," because, as we shall immediately point out, the notion of freedom is included in the notion of an originative cause.

Many Libertarians, when explaining Freewill, are in the habit of introducing reference to the human personality, to the "Ego." We do not find this necessary; and if it be not necessary, we think it very undesirable. Those questions which concern the "Ego" are so intricate, and, we may add, so intimately mixed up with theological dogma, that their treatment requires most anxious care. Nor can we see that the true doctrine of human personality, whatever it may be, has any special relevance to the exposition with which we are here engaged. Without further reference, therefore, to the "Ego," we now proceed with that exposition.

To sum up matters, then, as far as we have gone, assuming for a moment the truth of Theism. If we contemplate that vast assemblage of substances and phenomena in the universe which are known to man by experience and reason—bound together as they are in a chain of

\* We abstain from saying, with some Libertarians, that the free agent is at every moment directly and immediately conscious of his freedom, because it seems to us unintelligible how the direct and immediate consciousness of one given moment can testify an abiding power. Our own way of speaking would be that I have an unremitting and most intimate knowledge of my own freedom, founded on my intimate familiarity with my own repeated mental acts. As far as we can see, however, the question between these Libertarians and ourselves is purely a verbal one.

interacting causation—we may observe this circumstance. There are two kinds of substances\*—and neither experience nor reason testifies more than two—which act as originaive causes: these two are (1) God, and (2) the souls of men. The First Cause, God, is, we need not say, originaive of everything. He created that vast number of physical substances which first existed in the universe, endowing each with its own forces and attributes, and enabling them to coalesce into fresh substances. He conserves the agency of substances, as of so many blind causes; and, *through* that agency, He preserves the enormous multitude of physical phenomena which succeed each other regularly and harmoniously, according to the law of prevenience.† He created the human body and conserves its agency, with its own appropriate efficacy as a blind cause towards the production, not of physical only, but also of psychical phenomena. He created the human soul, uniting it mysteriously with the human body, endowing it also with diversified efficacy as a blind cause, and conserving it in the exercise of that efficacy. And by these two combined agencies He originated that large number of psychical phenomena which, no less than physical, move forward regularly and harmoniously, according to the law of prevenience. But over and above all this, He endowed the human soul with the unspeakably important and charac-

\* We feel the extreme awkwardness of this expression, but cannot think of a better

† We must not be understood to imply by this phrase that, having created substances each possessing its own forces and attributes, God leaves them to themselves, with only the co-operation of His general concourse, in their generation of corresponding phenomena. In our essay on "Science, Prayer, Freewill, and Miracles," we earnestly deny this, and we base on our denial a defence of the Christian's prayer for temporal (not to say spiritual) blessings. Certainly (as we argue at length in that essay) there is no vestige of inconsistency in saying that—even while phenomena move strictly and rigorously on the law of prevenience—God, nevertheless, is actively working at every moment behind the veil, and stimulating their course in this or that direction.

teristic power of originaive causation. This power enables me, within certain limits, at my own pleasure and choice, to break off from the chain of prevenance; nay, to act, in a certain true sense, independently of God. It is involved, we say, in this doctrine of Freewill which we maintain, that God has, to a certain extent, abdicated the controlment of my acts, and left them to my own independent choice \*

Here we give up our momentary assumption of Theism, and proceed at once to the last stage of our argument. At this point we introduce, more prominently and directly than hitherto, the term "Freewill;" and we thus define that term in connection with our preceding remarks. At whatever moment and within whatever sphere my soul has the proximate power of acting as an originaive cause—whether it *exercise* that power or no—at that moment and within that sphere my "will" is said to be "free." And it remains to show that this definition is precisely equivalent to that which is more commonly given than any other by Catholic philosophers. We do not mean that Catholics are *bound* to this latter definition; for the Church allows considerable latitude of opinion on the matter. At the same time, she fully permits her children to hold—what for ourselves we do hold—that no view of Freewill is altogether satisfactory to the intellect, except that taken by the great Jesuit theologians; and we think that their view is becoming every day the more commonly accepted one among Catholics. It is usually expressed thus: "*Potentia libera est ea quæ, positis omnibus requisitis ad agendum, potest agere et non agere.*" There is a certain awkward-

\* We may at this point assure our theological readers, how very far we are from forgetting the vast and inestimable influence for good exercised by God over man's Freewill. We have elsewhere ventured to express, as the bias of our own judgment, that "those exercises of Freewill on which the salvation of any given person substantially and predeminantly depends, are those whereby he prays to God for infallible grace."

ness, indeed, in this exact *form* of the definition, because some given "power" may possibly be "free" in some acts, and yet not in all. F. Palmeri, accordingly, words it somewhat differently: "*Libertas est ea indifferentia activa agentis, quâ, positis omnibus ad agendum requisitis, potest agere et non agere:*" and it is in this form that we prefer it. To appreciate its bearing, whether in one form or the other, let us consider any given moment of human action. My soul possesses certain qualities, intrinsic and inherent; certain faculties, tendencies, habits, and the like, and it is solicited by various attractions, having respectively their own special intensity, direction, and adaptation to my temperament. In order that my soul may act, nothing more is necessary than that which now exists: "*Posita sunt omnia requisita ad agendum.*"\* My will cannot be *free*, say these theologians, unless at this very moment my soul has a real power, at least, of either doing this given act or *not* doing it. They consider, of course, that in a vast majority of cases it has *more* power than this; it has the power of acting with greater or less efficiency in this or that direction. But unless it have, at least, *so much* power as above described, my will is not free at all. And we should add two very obvious explanations. Firstly, when *the will* is said to act, this is a mere figure of speech; for it is the *soul* which acts.† Secondly, when the soul is said to "act," the immediate reference is to its own *internal* action; whether or no that internal action be the *resolving* — on, nay, the immediately *commanding* of, some external act.

\* The Theist indeed holds that God's concursus is also necessary, but then he further holds that it is always given.

† Unless, indeed, a real distinction be supposed between the soul and its powers. We have already quoted, however, with assent Mr Lucas's repudiation of such a doctrine. It is one for which much might be said if it were permissible, on matters of pure philosophy, to go by *authority*, but for which we have never seen any *argument* that appears to us of weight.

Such, then, being the more recognized Catholic definition of Freewill, we are now to show that this definition is precisely equivalent to that which we just now gave in our own language, and in accordance with our earlier remarks. And one or two homely illustrations will make this abundantly clear.

I am walking, for health's sake, in my grounds on a bitterly cold day. My strongest present desire is to be back comfortably in the warm house, but I persistently refuse to gratify that desire, remembering the great importance of a good walk, not only for my general health, but for my evening's comfort and my night's sleep. Plainly, according to the Jesuit definition, my will acts with perfect freedom. My present action is resistance to my strongest present desire, and I have full proximate power to abstain, if I choose, from the continuance of this action by resolving to go indoors. But no less plainly this act is free, according to that definition of Freewill which *we ourselves* set forth. My soul and body, co-operating as blind causes, generate my preponderating spontaneous impulse towards going indoors; while my soul, acting as an originaive cause, generates my continued *resistance* to that preponderating spontaneous impulse.

Conversely. I am sitting over the fire, with a novel in my hand, and my strongest present desire is to continue in my present position. I remember, indeed, that nothing in a small way can well be worse for me, and that I shall pay dearly for my self-indulgence. "*Video meliora proboque : deteriora sequor,*" and I stay just as I am. Here, again, according to the Jesuit definition, I am undeniably free; for I am entirely able, without any further "*requisita ad agendum,*" either to continue my self-indulgent action or to abstain from it. And here, again, my freedom is equally manifest, according to *our own* definition of freedom. True, indeed, my soul is not at this moment acting

as an originative cause; but it has the *proximate power* of so acting if it pleases.\*

At last, indeed, the fact before us is perhaps too obvious to need illustration. It is most plain on the very surface, that whenever and within whatever sphere I have the proximate power to do or not to do this action, at that time and within that sphere my soul has the proximate power to act, if it so choose, as an originative cause. And if this be so, the two definitions of Freewill are of course mutually equivalent. But the sense of the term being thus understood, there is absolutely nothing which we need add to our preceding remarks, in order to show that men do possess that power called Freewill, and by no means unfrequently are able to exercise it. Moreover, what we have now said is abundantly sufficient, as will be shown in subsequent essays, for the direct purpose we have in view: it is an exposition of Freewill abundantly sufficient as a premiss for the establishment of Theism. At the same time, we are here brought into the close presence of a question which in other ways is of the gravest importance, both speculative and practical. During how many moments of the day, in what acts, under what conditions, am I free? Some Libertarians, *e.g.*, have implied, or even expressed, a proposition of this kind. "My will is not at this moment free," they say, or seem to say, "unless I am at this moment placing before myself the alternative, 'shall I now do this act or not do it?' Otherwise," so they proceed, "how can it be true that I have the *proximate power* to abstain from it? How can it be said that I have the proximate power of abstaining from an act, when the very thought of abstaining from it does not occur to me?" This position seems to us, as we

\* In this particular case, indeed, it may perhaps be said really to act as an originative cause, as originating the act "I don't choose just now to resist my strongest present desire." For reasons, however, which will appear hereafter, we prefer our definition as it stands.

have said, so pregnant with momentous results, whether for good or evil, that we think it deserved much more sustained and systematic notice than it has commonly received. We will give two different illustrations of what seems to us undeniably involved in it.

Firstly, take the case of a holy man occupied in meditation and prayer. At first he places before himself the alternative, "Shall I do this or not do it?" But as he proceeds in his holy task, he is too much immersed in the thought of God to think at all about *himself*. He dwells, *e.g.*, on the mysteries of Christ; he makes corresponding acts of faith, hope, and love; he prays for the Church; he prays for his enemies; he prays for the various pious ends which he has at heart; and his thoughts are entirely filled with such holy contemplations. It seems not less than grotesque to suppose that all this time he has been asking himself the question, "Shall I go on with these prayers of mine or shall I leave them off?" And yet, according to what seems the obvious meaning of that position which we criticize, as soon as ever he *ceases* to ask himself this question, his moral freedom comes temporarily to an end. From that moment his prayers are no more free—and therefore no more formally good and no more meritorious—than if he were in bed and asleep.

A picture on the opposite side. In my evening examen, I observe clearly that, during a long conversation which I have had with a friend, I have been largely animated by vainglory, and I ask forgiveness of my sin accordingly. Yet at the time when I was occupied in that conversation, I had no suspicion whatever of the motive which was in fact at work. It would seem to follow, from the doctrine we criticize, that the acts of vainglory, not having been free, had not been culpable; and that to repent of them was as absurd on my part as it would be to repent of a bad dream.

For, plainly, since I did not know that these acts of vain-glory existed, still less did I ask myself the question whether I should continue them or no. In fact, as far as we can see, the doctrine before us would deny the possibility of there *being* such offences as *secret* sins at all; for if I do not *know* of the sinful acts, how, on this view, can I be held responsible for their commission? Yet Abbé Gay, in that ascetical work of his which has obtained so unusually wide authorization and approval (see the *Dublin Review* for July, 1878, p. 229), gives a very different account of this matter; and here surely he represents all ascetical writers without exception. He commemorates that “unhappy legion of sins, unknown and concealed from ourselves, from which David besought God to purify his soul.” “Ab occultis meis munda me.” How can I be *purified* from offences, which, being inculpable, have carried with them no defilement?

We suppose that, with most of our readers, such inferences as these will be *reductiones ad absurdum* of the premiss from which they result. Yet it requires great care to draw out accurately such principles on Freewill as may sufficiently guard against conclusions so intolerable. This necessary inquiry, moreover, is so intimately connected with many remarks which we have made in this or preceding essays, and is indeed so necessary as a supplement of those remarks, that we are very unwilling to omit it. The next subject, indeed, which is to occupy us—the “Reasonable Basis of Morality”—will itself supply more than one premiss, which will be of great importance in such a discussion. What we hope, then, to do, is this: After having concluded our treatment of this last-named theme, we purpose to suspend for a moment the direct course of our series, and insert an intercalary essay, addressed to Catholics, in order that we may handle this domestic ques-



tion with the carefulness due to its critical importance. We are particularly desirous of submitting our views on this matter to the judgment of Catholic thinkers.\*

\* The essay here referred to is the essay on the "Extent of Freewill," the last in the second volume of this collection —ED

END OF VOL. I.





